

A STUDY OF EFCA ATTITUDES TOWARD WOMEN IN MINISTRY

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF
GORDON-CONWELL THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
SOUTH HAMILTON, MASSACHUSETTS

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY

ROBERT C. WILLIAMS

April 23, 1999

To Karen
who lived by I Peter 3:1-4 that
I might know Jesus as my Savior and Lord

A STUDY OF EFCA ATTITUDES TOWARD WOMEN IN MINISTRY

Abstract

The Evangelical Free Church of America (EFCA) does not ordain women for pastoral ministry under present rules and regulations. This policy was made clear after discussions in the mid-1980's. A prohibition against the ordination of women for such ministry, however, has not always been the policy of Free Church associations throughout the history of the movement.

This study begins with a review of the history of women in pastoral ministry in Free Church associations. After an examination of history, and a brief look at pertinent biblical passages, attention is directed to the current "traditionalist/complementarian" versus "egalitarian" debate. The arguments in this debate are presented as part of a review of recently published books and articles. Particular emphasis is given to a review of major contributions by EFCA scholars. The last chapter examines the opinions of EFCA pastors and lay leaders on the issue of women in ministry and especially the present EFCA policy related to it. The opinions were obtained through responses to a survey mailed to one third of the EFCA churches in the United States. Major findings in the study are: a). EFCA leaders overwhelmingly reject the concept of women being ordained to pastoral ministry; b). many seem to have become emotionally involved in the debate.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Dedication	iii
Abstract	iv
Tables	vi
I. WOMEN IN MINISTRY: Past and present policies and opinions within The Evangelical Free Church of America	1
II. THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK: Scripture passages relating to women in ministry	24
III. LITERATURE REVIEW: Major contributions in literature over the past twenty-five years to the subject of women in ministry	45
IV. PROJECT DESIGN	84
V. OUTCOMES	89
Appendix A - A Survey Concerning Women's Ministries	117
Appendix B - Survey Concerning Women in Ministry	118
Appendix C - Quantitative Analysis of Survey Results	120
Appendix D - Tables: Survey Questions 1,3,& 5	130
Works cited	133

TABLES
(Other than Appendix D)

Table	Page
Pilot Survey	
1. Frequencies of Agreement with EFCA Policy Concerning Not Ordaining Women According to Age Groupings.....	92
2. Frequencies of Agreement with EFCA Policy Concerning Not Ordaining Women According to Education.....	93
3. Frequencies of Agreement with EFCA Policy Concerning Not Ordaining Women According to Living Area.....	93
4. Frequencies of Agreement with EFCA Policy Concerning Not Ordaining Women According to Being in Leadership....	94
Pastor and Lay Leader Survey	
1. Beliefs About Ordination and Education Level.....	97
2. Beliefs About Ordination and Living Area.....	98
3. Beliefs About Ordination and Age Range.....	98
4. Agreement with EFCA Policy and Education Level.....	102
5. Agreement with EFCA Policy and Living Area.....	103
6. Agreement with EFCA Policy and Age Range.....	103
7. Belief Change in 10 Years with Educational Level.....	105
8. Belief Change in 10 Years with Living Area.....	106
9. Belief Change in 10 Years with Age Range.....	106

CHAPTER 1
WOMEN IN MINISTRY:
PAST AND PRESENT POLICIES AND OPINIONS
WITHIN
THE EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH OF AMERICA

The Evangelical Free Church movement began in the United States in the latter half of the nineteenth century. In its more than one hundred year history, the policies and attitudes toward the ordination of women, and the ministry of women in general, have changed.

Today, policies are well established in The Evangelical Free Church of America (EFCA), a denomination springing from the Evangelical Free Church movement. Opinions about existing policies, however, have not been examined in detail since they were established in the mid 1980s. Annual conferences and scholarly papers have been used to solicit and influence opinions while encouraging debate, but these activities do not necessarily draw out what people throughout the denomination are thinking.

Through this thesis-project, an investigation has been conducted in an effort to determine what EFCA leaders across the United States think about the policies now followed by their denomination in giving official recognition to women in ministry. A more subjective aspect of this investigation will be to determine who and/or what has been most

influential in shaping attitudes. Further, an attempt will be made to determine which Scripture passages people use to defend their beliefs on the subject of ordination of women for pastoral ministry.

A Brief History of the EFCA

The Evangelical Free Church of America, is a denomination which traces its roots back to the Evangelical Free Church movement in Scandinavian countries. This movement took place primarily during the nineteenth century. Subsequent to the beginning of the movement, large groups of immigrants from Sweden, Norway, and Denmark came to the United States between 1850 and 1900, and brought with them their theological doctrines and ecclesiastical beliefs. As a result of a large influx of Scandinavian Christian immigrants, two new Free Church affiliations began to grow in the Midwest and on the eastern seaboard of the United States. One group was known as the Swedish Evangelical Free Church and the other was identified as the Norwegian-Danish Evangelical Free Church Association. It is well to note that the Norwegian-Danish group was called an "association." This choice of a word to describe their bond of locally autonomous churches emphasizes the fact that "Free" Church people have always had a fear of denominationalism.¹ This fear was generated by their unpleasant experiences in state-sponsored churches in Scandinavia. Thus, Evangelical Free Church people have always encouraged independent thinking at the individual

¹Calvin B. Hanson, *What it Means to be Free* (Minneapolis: Free Church Publications, 1990), 212.

and local church level.

The two Free Church groups merged in 1950 to form the Evangelical Free Church of America, and grew rapidly as a new denomination. In the first five years following the merger, the EFCA added an average of twenty-five churches each year to its affiliation.² After the merger, the new denomination began to lose the strong ethnic emphasis which was so prevalent during the last half of the nineteenth century and first half of the twentieth century.

Recent Events in the EFCA

At the end of the twentieth century, the EFCA is a small but rapidly growing evangelical denomination. In 1959, nine years after the two small Scandinavian groups came together as a new denomination, there were 443 growing congregations affiliated with the EFCA.³ By 1990, *The Institute of Church Growth* in California listed the EFCA "as one of the fastest growing denominations in the United States."⁴ Today, there are approximately 1250 congregations scattered across continental United States, Alaska, and Hawaii.⁵ The more recently established congregations are also growing, and the denomination has been emphasizing church planting during the

² Ibid., 130.

³ Roy A. Thompson, *Toward New Horizons: The Evangelical Free Church of America, 1959-1969* (Minneapolis: Free Church Publications, 1969), 138.

⁴ Hanson, 228.

⁵ Evangelical Free church of America, *Beacon: Special Issue*, vol. 72, number 3 (Minneapolis: Evangelical Free Church of America, 1999), 13.

last few years of the twentieth century. Consequently, the EFCA has become a better known and respected denomination among evangelicals in recent years.

Another reason why the EFCA has gained a favorable reputation in recent years, is that the denomination's seminary, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School (TEDS), has become one of the premier and largest evangelical seminaries in the United States, if not the world. A few years ago, TEDS and Trinity College merged to form Trinity International University in Deerfield, Illinois. This university offers undergraduate, masters, and doctoral degrees to students from many countries, representing almost all Christian denominations. In fact, many potential pastors in a number of Protestant denominations choose to attend TEDS to obtain a Master of Divinity degree.

Professors at TEDS have written many books on a number of subjects which are important to evangelicals in the United States. As these scholars have become better known through their books, the EFCA has also become better known and appreciated as a leader in evangelical circles.

Based on the above developments, and a number of cultural and spiritual dynamics which are beyond the scope of this paper, the EFCA has become an influential body in evangelical Christianity during the latter half of this century. Thus, the attitudes and opinions of EFCA leaders have had at least some impact on what fundamentalists and evangelicals think about controversial theological and ecclesiastical issues in the United States today.

One issue which has been in the forefront of evangelical

debate over the last half of the twentieth century is that of the role of women in ministry. To appreciate this fact, one needs only to be made aware of the number of books which have been written on the subject over approximately the past twenty-five years. One book written in 1987 listed more than 250 books and articles in its bibliography which were written between 1977 and 1987.⁶ A great deal of controversy over the issue of women in ministry developed among evangelicals in the late 1970s. Consequently, many books and articles were written during this period. The issue, however, has not died down significantly since 1987, and many additional books have been written in the past 12 years.

A book edited by John Piper and Wayne Grudem, a TEDS professor, is a more recent contribution to the subject of women in ministry.⁷ This rather large volume (almost 500 pages) has received much attention and comment in evangelical circles. Worthy of note is the fact that five of the twenty-two contributing authors to this book teach or have taught at TEDS - the seminary for the EFCA. This is but one more indication of how evangelical leaders associated with the EFCA are having an effect on conservative, evangelical Christians in the United States. Because the Piper and Grudem book, *Recovering Biblical Manhood & Womanhood*, promotes a view in which "some governing and teaching roles

⁶Ruth A. Tucker and Walter Liefeld, *Daughters of the Church: Women and ministry from New Testament times to the present* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1987), 511-540.

⁷John Piper and Wayne Grudem, ed., *Recovering Biblical Manhood & Womanhood; A response to evangelical feminism* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1991).

within the church are restricted to men,"⁸ we can speculate that this traditional view may well be the view accepted by many in the EFCA and perhaps other evangelical groups.

In 1997, an incident took place at a retreat for EFCA pastors and wives in New England which raised the question of whether or not there exists a significant difference of opinion among EFCA church leaders over the issue of women in ministry. The speaker at the gathering was a retired professor from TEDS and, during his presentations to the group, he made it clear that he held a more inclusive view of women in ministry than many at the retreat.

After the retreat, several pastors wrote letters to the president of the Ministerial Association indicating that they did not agree with the views espoused by the speaker. One pastor stated in his letter that he hoped the Ministerial Association could "assure some of the newer churches and pastors who were in attendance that [the speaker] did not reflect the views of the EFCA at large." Another pastor wrote:

I realize that the ministerial could not control all that they (*the speaker and his wife*) were going to say and I am not upset. It is just that I walked away feeling ashamed of my view on women and yet I still believe it to be true and that the majority of the Free church hold the same perspective.

A third pastor requested that in the future, the ministerial not invite speakers who have "strong stands on controversial issues" (e.g. women in leadership in the church), especially if the speaker's stand is opposite to the "views of so many." He further suggested that it would be

⁸Ibid., 470.

better to have a controversial speaker be involved in a debate or a "give and take" forum.

The pastors who wrote these letters had strong feelings about the issue of women in ministry. A few pastors who attended the retreat in New England were surprised by the strength of conviction of those who wrote letters, and the reluctance to hear opposing viewpoints was disappointing.

The church in which the author is the pastor was organized in 1989 so that women could have leadership positions in the administration and ministry of the church, without violating the standards of the denomination concerning pastoral authority being limited to men. (The EFCA will not ordain women, and in so doing put them in a position to take a pastoral role in leadership over men.) In addition, the understanding of the core group which organized the church was that women could not serve as elders. Accordingly, the core group wrote the by-laws so that the deacon board has the primary responsibility for church administrative and ministry decisions. The deacon board includes both women and men. The elders, who must be men, are responsible for making certain that everything done in the church conforms to the EFCA twelve-point statement of faith. The elders, it should be noted, do not make decisions concerning administration and ministry so long as what is done conforms to the broad issues covered by the statement of faith.

Each Evangelical Free Church in the United States is "free" to organize as determined by the local congregation. The organization of the church just described is not unique

with its deacon board and elder board as the two elected bodies. What is unique is the fact that the church was organized with a specific goal of giving women as much authority as possible in the church, while conforming to EFCA standards. No doubt there are other EFCA churches which desire to give women opportunities to serve in the church. It seems unlikely, however, that many Free Churches started with a goal such as the one this New England church had at the beginning.

If it is true that there are few churches which have a specific goal of encouraging women to minister on a level equal to men, it would be well to discover this fact and understand why it is so. If there are many more pastors and leaders in the EFCA who feel the same way about women in ministry as the three who wrote letters after the retreat, this too would be worth knowing. An egalitarian view of EFCA women in ministry may be the minority view. Attempting to determine why the majority who oppose the egalitarian view think as they do would encourage intellectual honesty, and would be a worthwhile pursuit.

A Need to Determine Attitudes and Beliefs

Based on events surrounding the retreat and the letters which were generated as a result of the speaker's more inclusive views, one may well wonder exactly what pastors and lay leaders in the EFCA think about women in ministry. Accordingly, a survey was deemed to be an appropriate means by which to make this determination. As it would be much too

expensive to mail survey forms to every Evangelical Free Church, it was decided to select one-third of the churches at random and request that the senior pastor and a male and a female lay leader at each of these churches respond to the survey.

In taking a survey, there was no intention of creating controversy or generating animosity in the EFCA. An egalitarian viewpoint will be defended in this paper. An effort was made, however, to be as neutral as possible in taking the survey. By asking questions as to what church leaders think about ordaining women for pastoral ministry, the hope was that these people would evaluate their own views without feeling challenged in a divisive way. Everyone involved in EFCA ministry should take the words of caution from Dr. Kenneth Kantzer, and Dr. Calvin Hanson (both respected men in the denomination) very seriously. Their caution is found in a book by Dr. Hanson which was previously cited:

There are a number of theological issues that are potentially very divisive. *Such things as the ordination of women* [emphasis mine], the millennial question and many other controversial issues *have the potential of dividing a people, a church, or a denomination* [emphasis mine].⁹

As the survey form was being prepared, it was decided that the senior pastor of the churches chosen at random would fill out a survey and then give copies of it to a male and a female lay leader in his church. Of course, this method presents the potential for pastors to select people who share their opinions. Nevertheless, it seemed prudent to take the

⁹Hanson, 226.

survey in this manner.

The survey was written with the assumption that those who read it would have an understanding of the present policies of the EFCA concerning women in ministry, and perhaps some knowledge of the history of women in ministry in the denomination.

Present Policies of the EFCA Concerning Credentialing

The EFCA has four types of credentials which are issued to "affirm God's call upon a person's life."¹⁰ These credentials are: Certificate of Ordination, Certificate of Christian Ministry, Ministry License, and Recommendation for Ministry.¹¹ All of these ministerial credentials have certain qualifications which must be met.

The Certificate of Ordination "is designed specifically for those involved in pastoral ministry."¹² As described in the booklet entitled *Steps Toward Credentialing*, a man must meet the following requirements to receive a Certificate of Ordination from the EFCA:

Requirements for Ordination: The ordination credential may be issued to candidates who (1) are male in gender; (2) are involved in pastoral ministry; [emphasis mine] (seminary professors, military chaplains and missionary church planters are also eligible); (3) have completed an M.Div. degree or its equivalent in an evangelical seminary (unless an exception is made by the Board of Ministerial Standing in recognition of the candidate's knowledge and experience); (4) have

¹⁰ Evangelical Free Church of America, *Steps Toward Credentialing* (Minneapolis: The Evangelical Free Church of America, 1996), 1.

¹¹ Ibid., 4.

¹² Ibid.

completed the requirements for a ministerial license; (5) have been approved by an examining council; and (6) have demonstrated gifts in ministry to the satisfaction of the Board of Ministerial Standing.

Preparation for Ordination: The candidate for ordination must have held a ministry license for one full licensing period of three years in the Evangelical Free Church of America.¹³

A Certificate of Christian Ministry "is designed specifically for those involved in professional church ministries other than pastoral ministry."¹⁴ (Note that the requirements for a Certificate of Ministry list "associate/assistant pastors" as positions for which this certificate is issued. It would appear then that the phrase "ministries other than pastoral ministry" refers to every position other than that of the senior pastor at a church.) Thus, a *man* or a *woman* who is involved in church ministry other than *pastoral ministry* (meaning senior pastor) would apply for a Certificate of Christian Ministry.

The requirements for the Certificate of Christian Ministry are similar to requirements stipulated for a Certificate of Ordination, except that both *men and women* may obtain the Certificate of Christian Ministry. Specifically, the requirements are as follows:

Requirements for Certificate of Christian Ministry: This credential may be issued to candidates who (1) are involved in church ministry (*such as associate/assistant pastor, administrative pastor, youth pastor, minister of music, pastoral counselor, women's minister, children's minister, etc.*) [emphasis mine], institutional ministry, military chaplaincy, missionary ministry and evangelistic ministry; (2) have completed an

¹³Ibid., 4,5.

¹⁴Ibid., 6.

appropriate degree for their area of ministry from a recognized college or seminary (unless an exception is made by the Board of Ministerial Standing in recognition of the candidate's knowledge and experience); (3) have completed the requirements of a ministerial license; (4) have been approved by an examining council; and (5) have demonstrated gifts in ministry to the satisfaction of the Board of Ministerial Standing.

Preparation for Certificate of Christian Ministry: The candidate for this credential must have held a ministry license for one full licensing period of three years in The Evangelical Free Church of America. (This requirement may be waived in certain situations for military chaplains who are assured a chaplain's appointment.)¹⁵

As should be noted above, both the Certificate of Ordination and the Certificate of Christian Ministry have a requirement for the candidate to obtain a ministerial license prior to obtaining the appropriate certificate. As with the certificates, there are two types of licenses. One license leads to a Certificate of Ordination and the other leads to a Certificate of Christian Ministry. Here again, the License Leading to Certificate of Ordination is limited to applicants who are "male in gender."¹⁶ The License Leading to Certificate of Christian Ministry is a prerequisite for those who will obtain a Certificate of Christian Ministry and are involved in ministry such as associate pastor, assistant pastor, administrative pastor, youth pastor, minister of music, pastoral counselor, *women's minister*, children's minister, etc. The License Leading to Certificate of Christian Ministry is open to both men and women.¹⁷

¹⁵Ibid., 6,7.

¹⁶Ibid., 7.

¹⁷Ibid., 7,8.

When the survey mentioned above was being designed, it was assumed that pastors who were to receive it would understand what the phrase "ordained for the pastoral ministry" means in terms of the EFCA credentialing process. Further, it was assumed that the lay leaders would either understand the phrase or ask their pastor to explain it. As will be discussed in a later chapter, it appears that many pastors in the EFCA do not understand the relationships and requirements associated with ordination, pastoral ministry, and women in ministry as defined by the EFCA Board of Ministerial Standing in the booklet entitled *Steps Toward Credentialing*. If this is true, it comes as no surprise that many lay leaders in the EFCA also do not understand these relationships and requirements.

In developing an understanding of what EFCA people think about the question of women in ministry, and especially the issue of ordaining women for pastoral ministry, it may be helpful to examine the history of women in ministry in the EFCA.

The History of Women in Ministry in the EFCA

At about the time the Swedish Evangelical Free Church of America, and the Norwegian-Danish Evangelical Free Church Association were forming in the late 1880s, a number of short-term Bible Institutes were conducted in various places among the Scandinavian immigrants. The primary reason for conducting these Institutes was to prepare people for ministry - especially ministry as preachers. Many of these

Institute graduates were women. As Hanson pointed out, "Whatever can be said for the quality of this abbreviated training, these *preachers* [emphasis mine] were on fire for God."¹⁸ And God blessed their preaching.

A spiritual revival broke out among the Swedish, Norwegian, and Danish immigrants - especially in the Midwest. The preaching and evangelistic ministries of the Bible Institute graduates were pieces of the plan God used to bring about the revival.¹⁹ Hanson explained how women were involved in this revival:

The era of the giant spurt and revival blessing was, interestingly, the very era when women workers figured prominently in Free Church evangelism. More women than men had participated in the short Bible courses, thought to be sufficient preparation for gospel ministry, conducted by Franson and others. Women workers were in great demand as home missionaries. Singing, instrumental music, and testimony provided an attractive program which usually drew the crowds.²⁰

For a time during this period, women were called as pastors to a few churches which were a part of this revival among Scandinavians in the United States. Quoting another source, Hanson wrote:

Women workers were in great demand for a few years. It seemed that this mode of work would become permanent. One or more churches even called *women pastors* [emphasis mine]. Other churches desired and called *none but women* (italics added) to conduct revival meetings and mission meetings. None but women were thought of or welcomed.²¹

¹⁸Hanson, 75.

¹⁹Ibid., 77.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Golden Jubilee, 41; quoted in Calvin B. Hanson, *What it Means to be Free* (Minneapolis:Free Church Publications, 1990), 77-78.

Building on this point, Della E. Olson, wife of Dr. Arnold T. Olson who was president of the EFCA for 34 years, wrote the following in her informative book, *A Women of Her Times* (quoted in part):

References to women in responsible positions occur in many local church histories as well as in conference reports...

From the history of Lakeview Free Church, Chicago (now Edgebrook):

Many faithful messengers found their way to the simple place of assembly. Among many, the following should be mentioned: Professor and Mrs. J. Princell, pastors..., Amanda Gustafson and Christina Matson (emphasis mine).

Kerkhoven, MN: This is one case among many where in the beginning the church was served only by visiting pastors.

Several preachers came for shorter or longer visits.... In the spring of 1893 a blessed revival broke out, especially among the young people, during a visit from the highly esteemed Nelly Hall and Ida Nihlen.... Following the revival it became evident that there was a need for a full time pastor and one was secured.

Kimbro, TX:

In the early days the church had no permanent pastor, but occasional visits from pastors in the area. Later, Anna Johnson and Ida Anderson were called as *permanent pastors* (emphasis mine).²²

After those years in the late 1800s and into the early 1900s, the ordination of women in Evangelical Free churches seems to have been limited almost entirely to those who were assigned to a mission field or participating in "itinerant evangelistic work."²³ In fact, Tucker and Liefeld tell us

²²Della Olson, *A Woman of Her Times: Stories of women who dared to place obedience to the commands of Christ above submission to the traditions of men* (Minneapolis: Free Church Press, 1977), 60-61.

²³Ruth A. Tucker and Walter Liefeld, 390.

that, "Although few people denied the contribution that women evangelists made to the spread of the Free Churches, there was strong resentment among certain factions in the movement."²⁴

Even with resentment among some people in the Free Church movement during the first half of this century, the Swedish group maintained an openness to the possibility of women becoming qualified for ordination. Hanson describes the situation:

By using both the masculine and the feminine pronoun throughout the ordination document, though very few women were ordained, the regulations of the Swedish group very explicitly guarded the right to ordain women.²⁵

More recently, the EFCA looked back at the open attitude held by the Swedish group prior to merger, and used this historical position to comment on rules of ordination:

In 1975 the Committee on Ministerial Standing, following their study of the status of women in connection with the rules of ordination, submitted their report which concluded as follows:

At no time during the years of merger negotiations was the matter of the historic practice and rules regarding the ordination of women discussed. Nor do our present rules specifically state that one is or is not eligible because of sex.

It is therefore the conclusion of the Committee on Ministerial Standing that were a local church in accordance with its autonomy as stated in paragraph X of the doctrinal statement, to call a woman to be a pastor and were she to apply and meet all qualifications for ordination, the Committee would be in order in recommending her as a candidate for ordination.

²⁴Ibid., 391.

²⁵Hanson, 209.

The Committee could not do otherwise unless through proper procedures the rules were changed to specifically exclude women from the privilege and thus change the historic ninety year policy of the Evangelical Free Church of America. (1975 Yearbook: *The Evangelical Free Church of America*, 303-304)²⁶

Following the 1975 report, and after much debate with a significant number of strong opinions being expressed, the Committee on Ministerial Standing determined in 1984 to address the controversial issue of how women could serve in ministry and be officially recognized by the EFCA:

Early in 1978 a study committee was appointed to consider the question of the ordination of women. After examining the appropriate Biblical and historical data, the committee published in April 1979, their recommendation which was a two-track system under which *the office of pastor/teacher would be reserved for men only while women would be eligible to be ordained for other church offices.* [emphasis mine].

This recommendation was not discussed, but was deferred...

In the interim it came to the attention of the Committee on Ministerial Standing that we had another issue relating to the credentialing of Christian ministers of which the question of the ordination of women was only a part. The larger question was how to appropriately credential those in full-time Christian ministry who were not desirous of being ordained a pastor/teacher and yet were eligible for credentialing in the church. Some illustrations might be C. E. Director, Youth Pastor, Music Director, Pastoral Care, Executive Pastor/Church Administrator, Assistant Pastor, etc.²⁷

Thus, during the years 1975 to 1984 the EFCA seriously debated the issue of women in ministry, especially the issue of ordaining women to the office of pastor/teacher. Further,

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷The Evangelical Free Church of America, *1983-1984 Yearbook* (Minneapolis: Free Church Press, 1984), 75a.

the debate was not limited to meetings of the Committee on Ministerial Standing, but arguments were heard at official gatherings such as the church-wide conferences held each summer.

One argument used to support the ordination of women for the office of pastor/teacher was that many women have served and continue to serve in the mission field, essentially doing the same work as men - planting churches, evangelizing, teaching, counseling, etc. But, when these same women come back to the United States, they are not allowed to speak from many EFCA pulpits if their message sounds like preaching or teaching. The response to this argument has always been that women in the mission field function as part of a team rather than serving in any sense as pastors. Addressing this response, Hanson writes:

However, the fact cannot be rationalized away that some Free Church women missionaries have been functioning in church planting no differently than have men. That the EFCA has been open to using women missionaries overseas in ways not permitted here at home is incontrovertible.²⁸

Dr. Hanson is well qualified to make this judgment because he served a number of years as a missionary in Japan.

After several years of debate by various denominational leaders, delegates to conferences, pastors, and lay leaders, the Committee on Ministerial Standing commissioned a study by three scholars to look at what Scripture teaches on the subject of the ordination of women. The records indicating when this study was commissioned were not available and the study is not dated. Other records and dates found in

²⁸Hanson, 210.

footnotes, however, suggest that it was commissioned in 1985.

Dr. Thomas A. McDill, president of the EFCA at the time the study was commissioned, wrote in the introduction to the published work:

The purpose of this booklet is to present the two major viewpoints (*positive considerations for the ordination of women, and arguments opposed to the ordination of women*) [italics added] so that pastors and lay people can more intelligently and Biblically understand the complexities of the subject, wrestle with the scriptural texts, and arrive at conclusions with which they can feel comfortable. *It is also hoped that this study will engender greater tolerance toward others who hold opposing views* [emphasis mine].²⁹

As will be shown in a later chapter, there are some in the EFCA today who do not demonstrate tolerance for "others who hold opposing views" on the subject of the ordination of women for pastoral ministry. In fact, some in the denomination today do not want others to raise questions on the subject.

There are also indications that tolerance was lacking in some quarters back in 1986. Hanson describes how a resolution calling for discussion without divisiveness was adopted at the 1986 annual conference. Sadly, even a call for reasonable discussion among Free Church people brought about "unfortunate misunderstandings." The events are recounted as follows:

The 1986 annual conference addressed the question of the role of women in ministry and then adopted a resolution which, while offering no definition,

²⁹Thomas A. McDill in the introduction to a booklet by Walter L. Liefeld, Douglas Moo, and Philip B. Payne, "What Does the Scripture Teach about the Ordination of Women," a study commissioned by the Committee on Ministerial Standing, The Evangelical Free Church of America.

brought the subject back to a prime EFCA distinctive.

BE IT RESOLVED:

That discussion of the role of women in ministry be encouraged throughout the Evangelical Free Church of America, and that we affirm our Evangelical Free Church heritage and its outstanding distinctives by not allowing this issue to separate us, allowing for diversity in this "non-essential" matter.

(1986-87 Yearbook, p. 14c.)

Discussions erupted almost immediately, including in the pages of *The Evangelical Beacon*. Two unfortunate misunderstandings had clearly come to the fore: the equating of *women in ministry* with *ordination of women*; and taking the term "non-essential matter" to demean the place of women in ministry. Used in the theological sense, this phrase refers to matters other than the cardinal doctrines of the church and are therefore matters *non-essential to salvation*.³⁰

It appears that many people in the EFCA were and still are unable to discuss the concept that women could be ordained to pastoral ministry without becoming emotionally involved in the discussion. For whatever reason, this subject "touches a nerve" in some Free Church people. As with the pastors who reacted to the speaker at the New England retreat, some may feel ashamed of their attitudes, while others want to limit discussion. It is as if an egalitarian viewpoint is inappropriate for a person who is a member of an Evangelical Free Church. Perhaps some people opposed to discussion believe that the issue is "dead" and should remain so.

In 1988, the Board on Ministerial Standing made official what the EFCA finally decided about the ordination of women for pastoral ministry. The official position was discussed

³⁰Ibid., 211.

above in describing the various certificates issued by the EFCA.

Given the above history and the evaluation of current events, one may wonder if it is general knowledge among people in the EFCA that some of their most prominent leaders have been egalitarian on the subject of women in ministry. The fact that some leaders are egalitarian may make no difference at all. It is interesting, however, to note how many EFCA leaders agree with the statement of "Biblical Truths" endorsed by *Christians for Biblical Equality* (CBE).

Among a number of other statements concerning a Biblical interpretation of creation, redemption, community, and family, CBE advocates the following applications concerning "community" (church):

1. In the church, spiritual gifts of women and men are to be recognized, developed and used in serving and teaching ministries at all levels of involvement: as small group leaders, counselors, facilitators, administrators, ushers, communion servers, and board members, and in pastoral care, teaching, preaching [emphasis mine], and worship.

In so doing, the church will honor God as the source of spiritual gifts. The church will also fulfill God's mandate of stewardship without the appalling loss to God's kingdom that results when half of the church's members are excluded from positions of responsibility.

2. In the church, public recognition is to be given to both women and men who exercise ministries of service and leadership.

In so doing, the church will model the unity and harmony that should characterize the community of believers. In a world fractured by discrimination and segregation, the church will dissociate itself from worldly or pagan devices designed to make women feel inferior for being female. It will help prevent their departure from the church or their rejection of the Christian

faith.³¹

The pamphlet goes on, placing this affirmation and pledge above the signatures of numerous leaders from a large number of Christian denominations and groups:

We believe Biblical equality as reflected in this document is true to Scripture.

We stand united in our conviction that the Bible, in its totality, is the liberating Word that provides the most effective way for women and men to exercise the gifts distributed by the Holy Spirit and thus to serve God.³²

Some of the EFCA leaders, TEDS professors, and former professors who signed this document detailing the convictions of *Christians for Biblical Equality* were: Kenneth S. Kantzer, Walter L. Liefeld, Richard N. Longenecker, Arnold T. Olson, Grant Osborne, Philip Barton Payne, and Ruth A. Tucker.³³ Do people in the EFCA know that these leaders believe Scripture teaches that women can and should be allowed to teach and preach in the church just as men do?

Conclusion

We have considered the history of the Free Church movement in the United States, and the growth of the Evangelical Free Church of America. We have examined the inconsistent attitudes and policies the EFCA has held through the years on the issue of ordaining women to pastoral ministry. We have questioned whether or not egalitarian

³¹ *Christians for Biblical Equality, Men, Women & Biblical Equality* (St. Paul: Christians for Biblical Equality, 1989), 2.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ *Ibid.*

views on the issue of women in ministry are open to discussion in the EFCA, and determined that a survey about beliefs and attitudes may be instructive. Let us now consider the theological framework upon which further discussion must be built.

CHAPTER 2

THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK:

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES RELATING TO WOMEN IN MINISTRY

There are several passages in the New Testament which speak directly to the issue of women serving in church ministry or participating in worship in the church. In addition, there are passages in both the Old Testament and the New Testament which relate to this subject in a more general way, or are used by New Testament authors, especially Paul, to support a point being made about worship.

The passages considered in this chapter may or may not appear to be complete, depending on one's views. A "traditionalist" may emphasize certain passages, while an "egalitarian" looks at others. The following discussion of Old and New Testament passages will include most of those normally referred to by scholars on both sides of the debate.

Chapter 3, reviews much of the recent literature which deals with the passages under consideration. In that context, it evaluates how various authors have defended their positions based on the hermeneutical and exegetical thoughts they have applied to these passages. In the process of evaluating what others have written, it will be necessary to defend certain views in more detail. The present discussion, simply alludes to the various positions people

frequently take, based on their understanding of each passage. and make brief observations about these positions.

Genesis 1:26-28

This passage dealing with the first account of creation in the book of Genesis contains the frequently quoted words, "...God created man in his own image..." Following these words, however, is an equally important phrase which reads "...male and female he created them." After establishing the point that God created both a man and a woman in his image, the passage goes on to describe how God gave the man and the woman the commands to "*be fruitful*" and "*rule over*" all that he had created.

Those who refer to this passage when discussing the issue of women in ministry, normally do so to make the point that God created the man and the woman in equality because both were created in his image. It was not the man only who was created in *the image of God*. The woman bears *the image of God* without any indication that his image in her is impaired or diminished in any way when compared to that of his image in the man.

Defining the *image of God* is not a simple matter. Much has been written on this subject. Note those aspects of *the image of God* which are frequently cited by evangelical scholars. Dr. Carl Henry writes:

Evangelical expositors of the Biblical revelation find the created image of God to exist formally in man's personality (moral responsibility and intelligence) and materially in his knowledge

of God and his will for man.³⁴

Thus, one aspect of the *image of God* has to do with *intelligence*. If one accepts the above definition of the *image of God*, and the concept that both the man and the woman were created equally blessed by that image, then it follows that both the man and the woman were created with equal intelligence because both were created with equality in God's image. This point is worth noting because some people question whether or not Eve was created with equal intelligence based of a line of reasoning derived from their exegesis of I Timothy 2:14 and the Genesis account of "the fall of man" (Genesis 3:1-19).

Before leaving Genesis 1:28, it should be pointed out that both the man and the woman were to have responsibility in ruling over God's creation. At least at this point in Scripture, the functions and responsibilities for both the man and the woman seem to be on an equal basis. Other passages in Scripture are frequently cited to insist that the functions and responsibilities of males and females are viewed differently in God's sight. But at this point of creation, the man and the woman were given equal gifts and responsibilities in the *image of God*.

The second chapter of Genesis contains more details about creation. From this account, and the account of the "fall of man" in chapter three, passages emerge that are cited to defend the position that women are in some ways not equal to men. It is tempting to use the word "inferior."

³⁴C.F.H. Henry, "Image of God," in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, ed. Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1984), 547.

This word, although descriptive of how some people describe the role and nature of women, is too strong and would be considered by most people as inappropriate for a discussion of the male-female relationship.

Genesis 2:15 - 3:24

Genesis 2:16-17 recounts that God gave Adam the command not to eat from "*the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.*" It appears that God gave Adam this command before Eve was created as Adam's mate (Gen.2:18-23). With this understanding, one line of reasoning is that when Adam did eat from the tree, he disobeyed a command given to him directly by God, and in so doing committed willful sin. Eve, on the other hand, must have learned about God's command through Adam. If this is so, Eve's sin was associated with disbelief and being deceived as opposed to a willful choice.

Some exegetes, who believe that women should be excluded from certain ministries, couple Genesis 3:1-7 with I Timothy 2:14 and draw a surprising conclusion. They deduce that, because Eve was easily deceived, she must have been less endowed with the ability to reason. This deduction leads to a final conclusion that women are not as intelligent as men. Consequently, they are not qualified to be leaders in the church. This is especially true if the leadership positions entail teaching men who are not as easily deceived. This line of reasoning, some believe, complements Paul's argument in I Timothy 2:11-14 as forbidding women to teach or have authority over men because Eve was the archetype for women

who are easily deceived. Others take the view that Eve usurped Adam's authority and took the position of leadership in their relationship. They see this action as her sin. It is difficult to understand how taking a leadership role indicates that Eve was deceived.

Those who do not accept the idea that all women are easily deceived, because Eve was deceived in the Garden of Eden, understand the Genesis 3:1-7 passage as simply describing how Eve participated in the original sin. Her sin is described as being the result of her being deceived, but this fact does not make her the archetype for all women.

Other Old Testament Passages

There are a number of passages in the Old Testament which refer to women performing ministry, participating in worship, or communicating with God in very personal ways. In all of these passages, God initiates the relationship or blesses it by his response. Although there is no inference that these forms of ministry and worship were to be normative for all women throughout the ages, it is clear that women were called or allowed to do these things in the Old Testament, and that God approves of such activity. Susan Foh summarizes the ministry and worship activities of women in the Old Testament very well:

God made his covenant with women as well as men (Deut 29:1-11); women were required to hear God's Word read aloud (Deut 31:12; Neh 8:2). Women "ministered" at the tabernacle door (Ex 38:8; 1 Sam 2:22). They offered their own sacrifices (Lev 1; 15; 1 Sam 2:19) and prayed directly to God (Gen 16:7-13; 1 Sam 1:9-18), and God spoke directly to them (Gen 25:22-23; Judg 13:3-5). Women could

become Nazarites devoted to God (Num 6), prophetesses (Miriam, Ex 15:20-21; Huldah, 2 Kings 22:14), wise women (1 Sam 25:3; 2 Sam 14:2; 20:16-22) and judges (Deborah, also a prophetess and wife, Judg 4:4).³⁵

There are other passages in the Old Testament which give some insight into how women ministered and worshipped, but one does not need to go into greater detail in order to establish the point that God accepted and even encouraged such ministry and worship.

In the context of the Old Testament, the primary passages which give a theological framework for understanding women in ministry are found in Genesis. Other passages are brief and provide little more than passing examples. In contrast, the New Testament addresses the subject of women in ministry in several books, and a great deal more attention is given to these matters.

The Gospels

In addition to the fact that women witnessed the crucifixion, all four Gospels (Matt. 28:1-10; Mark 16:1-11; Luke 24:1-10; John 20:1-18) recount the events following the crucifixion and burial of Jesus in which women went to his tomb and discovered that he had been raised from the dead. After making this discovery, they went to the disciples and testified to this miraculous event.

The significant aspect of this collective story is that women in the culture of that day were not considered credible

³⁵ Susan Foh, *Male Leadership View: The Head of the Woman is the Man,* in *Women in Ministry: Four Views*, ed. Bonnidell Clouse and Robert G. Clouse (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1989), 76.

witnesses. In the light of this fact, it is all the more interesting that God chose women to be the first witnesses to the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Many people may not find this fact significant in discussing women in ministry. Those who do, however, raise the question, "Would God cease to use women as primary witnesses to the power of the resurrection after that first Easter morning?"

Acts 1:12-14 & 2:1-21

In addressing the crowd at Pentecost, Peter refers to the book of Joel to explain how the Holy Spirit had come upon the followers of Jesus when they proclaimed "*the wonders of God*" (Acts 2:11) in languages other than their own. The passage he quotes is Joel 2:28-32, in which the prophet declares that "*sons and daughters will prophesy,*" and "*both men and women*" will receive the Holy Spirit. Peter explains to the crowd that the Holy Spirit had come upon the followers of Jesus and enabled them to speak in foreign languages so that the message of salvation through Jesus Christ might be heard by all.

At first glance, it is not obvious how women are involved in fulfilling the prophecy of Joel. It would seem that only men are present if one reads the NIV translation and some other English translations. These translations have Peter saying, "*These men are not drunk...*" (Acts 2:15). The word "men" is not in the original Greek. The demonstrative pronoun found in the sentence does, nevertheless, convey the

masculine plural. Yet, in the first chapter, we discover that the men who had followed Jesus were joined by "the women" for group prayer on a regular basis (Acts 1:14). Luke probably referred to women who had also followed Jesus as "the women" (cf. Luke 8:1-3 and Luke 23:49,55). Thus, it would appear that women were present at Pentecost and were involved in receiving the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. By accepting this premise, many understand in greater detail how the prophecy in Joel 2:28-29 was fulfilled that glorious day in the history of the church. Some may not accept this argument, but the prophet Joel did include women in his prophesy and Acts 2:17 is reporting the fulfillment of that prophesy at Pentecost.

Not only does the book of Acts suggest that women must have been involved in prophesy on that important day in church history, but women were in fact prophetesses as the Gospel spread through the Roman world.

Acts 21:7-9

During Paul's return from his third missionary journey, he and his companions went to Caesarea and stayed with an evangelist named Philip (Acts 21:8). This man, we are told, had four daughters who were prophetesses (Acts 21:9). Nothing more is said about these women, but it should be noted that Luke was inspired to relate how four women had received the ability to prophesy from God. Also in the book of Acts, a woman named Priscilla was involved in teaching matters of the faith.

Acts 18:18-28

On his second missionary journey, Paul was accompanied by Priscilla and her husband Aquila on a portion of the trip (Acts 18:18). Paul left the husband and wife team in Ephesus where they eventually encountered a Christian named Apollos. Because Apollos had not learned all he needed to know in order to be a teacher in the church, Priscilla and Aquila *"explained (more precisely "expounded") to him the way of God more adequately"* (Acts 18:26).

In this encounter, a woman instructed a man in matters of the faith. Some are quick to point out that Priscilla taught Apollos with her husband, and would have been considered under his leadership in that situation. Yet, Priscilla is named first in Acts 18:18 and 18:26 and appears to be the leader of the "team." (Only in Acts 18:2 where Luke introduces Aquila, and states that his wife's name is Priscilla, does Aquila appear first.) This may be conjecture. Nevertheless, Luke does not follow the accepted custom of the time which was to name the man before the woman. This raises the question as to whether or not Luke is making the point that Priscilla took the lead in teaching Apollos. For many the answer may be "no." The basic question still remains. Why did Luke break with convention in such an obvious way and name Priscilla first? Priscilla may well have been more knowledgeable or a better teacher than her husband. Paul named Priscilla first in two of his letters (Romans 16:3 and II Tim. 4:19) and Aquila first in another (I Cor. 16:19). This seems to indicate that she was considered a leader in

the husband and wife team at times.

Romans 16:1-2

Chapter 16 of Romans begins with Paul's personal greetings to people who were in Rome at the time he sent his letter. One of the people he greeted is a woman named Phoebe whom he described as a *"servant (or deaconess) of the church in Cenchrea"* (Acts 16:1). She may have been the messenger carrying the letter to Rome. It is unknown whether Phoebe was a deaconess in the technical sense of the word, or was a willing servant with no official position in the church. The Greek word could mean either.

Some would deny that Phoebe held an official position in the church, and would also deny that I Timothy 3:11 refers to deaconesses. In so doing, they take the position that there should be no deaconesses in our churches today. The people who hold this view are in the minority. Those who do, however, go one step further toward limiting ministry for women in the church.

Scholars debate whether or not Phoebe was an official in the church at Cenchrea, and perhaps it makes little difference. In any event, Paul considered her a great "helper" (the Greek word could indicate someone in authority), and asked the church in Rome *"to receive her in the Lord in a way worthy of the saints"* (Rom. 16:2).

Consideration must now be given to the two passages from I Corinthians which have caused much debate through the years. These passages and some in I Timothy are frequently

cited to defend the view that there should be limitations on what women are allowed to do in ministry.

I Corinthians 11:1-16

This rather lengthy passage contains Greek words and phrases which inspire scholarly debate in terms of translation and meaning. Paul also develops a discussion concerning length of hair for men and women which causes some people to question how Paul's admonitions should be applied in modern culture.

I Corinthians 11:1-16 contains other hermeneutical and exegetical difficulties. As for hermeneutics, the historical context describing how people were expected to wear their hair and cover or not cover their heads during worship services would seem to be important. It is not surprising that there were customs and expectations in those days which do not exist in contemporary society. Historians have described these differences, and many scholars use the historical findings to explain their hermeneutical approach and subsequent exegesis of this passage. Again, it is not surprising to discover that not all scholars believe that the historical context makes any difference and, as a consequence, the passage is believed to be normative for all cultures throughout the ages.

Paul's statement that *"the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God"* in verse 3, causes scholars to debate the meaning of "head" in this context. Some would understand "head" to mean

"superior" in the sense the word is used in job and work relationships today. This understanding brings the objection that such a connotation should not be used to describe the relationship between God the Father and Jesus Christ. Others have interpreted the word "head" to mean the "first in a sequence" or "source." Here again, objectors find theological and linguistic reasons to deny this understanding. Still others have argued for "head" as meaning "the one who represents another." This view also has objectors who believe that such an understanding does not fit with the more common uses of the word.

If exegetes have difficulty agreeing over the correct understanding of "head" in verse 3, the problem is exacerbated when verse 10 is brought into the debate. What does Paul mean when he writes, *"For this reason, and because of the angels, the woman ought to have a sign of authority on her head."* What is the *"sign of authority?"* Is it a head covering, or her hair, or both, or something else? Is the *"sign"* to show that her husband, or some other church leader has authority over her? Or is the *"sign"* to indicate her own authority? Why do the angels need a sign? Most of all, exactly how should this passage be applied to women having leadership positions in ministry? Does this passage in some way indicate that a woman may have a leadership position as long as she is under a "head" who is a man?

This passage from I Corinthians is not the only one in this letter which stirs much debate. I Corinthians 14:33-40 is even more difficult to interpret in light of other passages which seem to refute what is being said.

I Corinthians 14:33-40

For some, this passage in I Corinthians is irrefutable - *"women should remain silent in the churches."* This verse seems straightforward. Paul's statement is clear.

There are some questions to be answered, however. Wasn't Paul including women in his instructions concerning prophesying, speaking in tongues, and interpreting tongues from the very beginning of chapter 14? What is to be made of other passages in the New Testament where it seems clear that women should be allowed to prophesy and pray out loud in the church (cf. Acts 2:14-18)? Does this restrictive command for women to remain silent in I Corinthians 14:34 apply to all forms of communication and worship, or was it limited to some portion of the worship service in which questions were inappropriate? Were women the focus of Paul's instruction because they had little or no formal religious instruction and, as a consequence, had many questions? Is it that Paul placed the orderliness of worship over the desire of individuals to gain knowledge - especially when they could wait and ask their questions later?

Many would answer that the situation in Corinth is not the issue. They would emphasize that Paul uses the word *"churches."* If there was a problem, the problem extended to all churches. They would contend that the problem seems to be within the nature of women rather than in any historical-cultural context. From this point of view, they say, the admonition for women to remain silent is normative.

This is a difficult passage to understand and this paper has not addressed all of the questions which scholars have raised through the years. However, the above discussion will give the reader some appreciation for all that is involved in trying to understand this passage.

The problem that some face in applying this passage to the modern setting is that almost all churches allow women to speak during portions of the worship service. Even churches which limit what women can do in worship when it comes to teaching, praying, or "prophesying," usually allow them to speak at some point. The absolute command for women to be silent is almost never enforced. Most churches allow women to pray out loud, read Scripture (at least in unison with others), sing (even solos), and give testimonies. To allow this indicates the church recognizes that the admonition by Paul has limitations. Where does a church draw the line?

Many people who address these questions about women in ministry feel that there is no line to be drawn. They would return to the argument that men and women are equal in God's sight. The verse which they refer to is found in Paul's letter to the Galatians.

Galatians 3:28

Galatians 3:28 clearly states that there is to be no distinction between men and women, for all are "*one in Christ Jesus*." Many people believe that this verse should govern everything else in Scripture about men and women and their apparent differences - including opportunities to minister.

Those who disagree with this interpretation understand this verse to mean that men and women are equal in God's sight in terms of salvation, sanctification and glorification. From their view, the verse has nothing to do with issues about women serving in church ministry.

This verse in Galatians calls forth strong feelings about how to apply Scripture to women serving in the church.

I Timothy 2:8-15

This is the passage which receives the most attention when people debate what women should be allowed to do in ministry. No other passage seems to be so applicable to the issue of women fulfilling teaching and preaching ministries as does I Timothy 2:8-15. This passage will receive even more attention in the next chapter.

Several preliminary questions should be asked when seeking to apply the instructions in I Timothy 2 to the matter of women being allowed to teach and preach in church. One is, where should one begin reading this passage in order to understand the context? Should verse 8 be included in the discussion? Or, is verse 8 a paragraph unto itself, as presented in the New International Version? Further, do verses 9 and 10 have anything to do with verses 11 through 15, or just with verse 8 - if verse 8 applies at all? Answering these questions changes the focus of the discussion. Some would include verses 8 through 10 and point out that the context for everything in the last half of chapter 2 is prayer and the correct demeanor in prayer.

Others would exclude verse 8 and see the context as worship in general. Still others would exclude verses 8 through 10 and focus on the issue of women having functions in the church which involve teaching and exercising authority over men.

If one takes the position that the context is prayer only, it is difficult to understand how teaching and exercising authority applies to the discussion. If one takes the position that the context is worship in general, it is possible to make this connection. If one simply focuses on verses 11 through 15, it does not change the discussion very much, because everything seems to focus on verses 11 and 12 containing the imperatives, while 13 through 15 provide the rationale. Verses 9 and 10 seem to provide additional instructions which allow the reader to make comparisons as to what should be normative for women in worship.

Even if scholars agree upon the context, they still face one of the most difficult problems of exegesis in the New Testament. Exactly how should one translate verse 12? The New International Version translates the verse as follows: "*I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent.*"

Paul uses a Greek word, *authentain*, in verse 12 which has inspired others to write volumes about how the word should be translated. In most English Bibles the translation of *authentain* is "*to have authority.*" The King James Version uses a more derogatory phrase - "*to usurp authority.*" In any one of the modern translations, the thought is that a woman should not be allowed to teach in some uncertain context, nor

to assume a position of authority, if she must exercise that authority over a man.

Even if one assumes that *authenthein*, which is found only here in the New Testament, means "to have or usurp authority," the exegete must decide exactly what does it mean to have such authority. Does it mean to domineer? If so, would a proper use of authority be acceptable?

The question of just how to understand *authenthein* is compounded by the fact that the word has several meanings in classical Greek. It is appropriate to look outside the Bible for the meaning of a word, especially when the word is rare in Biblical usage. Richard and Catherine Kroeger point out that there are at least four meanings other than "to have authority" for this word.³⁶ Their findings will be discussed in chapter 3.

Even if scholars could agree that this unusual word has some meaning other than "to have authority," there still would remain at least one major question concerning the syntax. To translate *authenthein* in some other way than "to have authority" may necessitate that this infinitive become the object of the previous infinitive "to teach." Scholars differ over whether or not the syntax would allow this construction.³⁷ It is interesting to note, however, that Richard and Catherine Kroeger have ably defended the translation of I Timothy 2:12 as: "*I do not permit a woman to*

³⁶Richard Clark Kroeger and Catherine Clark Kroeger, *I Suffer Not a Woman* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1992), 37.

³⁷Walter Liefeld, "A Plural Ministry Response to an Egalitarian View: There is Neither Male nor Female in Christ," in *Women in Ministry: Four Views*, ed. Bonnidell Clouse and Robert G. Clouse (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1989), 216.

teach nor to represent herself as originator of man..."³⁸

It is clear that the translation of a single word and the assumptions made about syntax can make a great deal of difference in how one interprets what Paul is saying in this I Timothy passage. There has been much debate among scholars on these verses and very little agreement.

Paul's rationale for what he says in verses 11 and 12 is presented in verses 13 through 15. Verse 15 in particular presents some difficulties in theological understanding which may go beyond the scope of this thesis.

I Timothy contains more verses which impinge upon the discussion of what the New Testament teaches about women in ministry. Along with a passage from Titus, chapter three contains an important passage for consideration.

I Timothy 3:1-11 and Titus 1:1-6

It is I Timothy 3:1-11 and Titus 1:6-9 that Christians often turn to to find the qualifications for leaders in their churches. The I Timothy passage deals with elders (3:1-7) first, then deacons (3:8-13). Some argue that verse 11 refers to "deaconesses." Others disagree, and hold the position that the entire passage refers to men both as elders and deacons. Verse 11, for these people, refers to the manner in which wives of deacons should conduct themselves, because they are spouses of men in leadership. (It is well to note, however, that there is no possessive pronoun in the Greek, as one would expect if wives were the subject.)

³⁸Kroeger, 103.

Many evangelicals agree that Paul has men only in mind when he describes the qualifications for elders. This understanding is based on the fact that the Greek words used in verses 2 through 7 are masculine and would, according to this line of reasoning, exclude females. Titus 1:6-9 confirms for most people that elders should be men because the Greek words there are also masculine.

Verses 8 through 10 in I Timothy 3, along with 12 and 13, deal with qualifications for male deacons, based on the same line of reasoning. It is over verse 11 that one finds controversy.

The problem in verse 11 is that the word which defines the subject of the sentence can be translated in two ways. The word can mean "women" or "wives." If the word is translated as "women," then the sentence would refer to deaconesses. If it is translated "wives," then the verse refers to the wives of deacons.

Many Christians, including evangelicals, assume that verse 11 refers to deaconesses, and accept women into leadership in these positions. In order to allow women to have leadership positions as deaconesses, however, some churches structure their governing boards so that women do not assume leadership over men, according to the way in which they interpret I Timothy 2:12 as previously discussed.

One reason that some exegetes do not believe verse 11 refers to "deaconesses" is that, if it is so interpreted, Paul's flow of thought would be broken. Since verses 12 and 13 return to a description of the qualifications for male deacons, these people do not believe that verse 11 should

break the flow of thought by referring to women. Would not Paul wait until he finishes talking about men before he states qualifications for women? Many other exegetes do not believe that this is a strong point.

The above passages are the ones most often cited in taking a position on the issue of women in ministry. The following passage is not directly related to the issue, but addresses family relationships which could be relevant.

Ephesians 5:21-24

Some Christians are sensitive to the thought that if a woman were in a leadership role in a church, such as senior pastor, she could have difficulty fulfilling that role if her husband disagreed with her about a church matter. According to Ephesians 5:22-24, many believe that a woman must submit to her husband's will, if her will concerning some subject is in conflict with his. A woman in a pastoral role with authority over men would be placed in a compromising position if she found herself in opposition to her husband on a church issue.

Those who do not see this passage as suggesting potential conflict normally point out that a pastor is a servant, and both the husband and the wife should submit to one another according to verse 21 of this chapter in Ephesians. They would also argue that a couple with a proper marital relationship in the sight of God should be able to work everything out in love.

Having examined the passages which give the most

guidance or raise the most questions about a Biblical view of women in ministry, it is time to look at some of the literature which deals in depth with these passages.

CHAPTER 3
LITERATURE REVIEW:
MAJOR CONTRIBUTIONS IN LITERATURE
OVER THE PAST TWENTY-FIVE YEARS
TO THE SUBJECT OF WOMEN IN MINISTRY

Since the middle of the 1970s, numerous books and articles in scholarly journals have appeared addressing the subject of women in ministry. This chapter considers only a selection of books which have been made available in the marketplace. It would be far beyond the scope of this thesis to cite all of the literature on this subject. The chapter reviews those books which are most often referred to by those involved in studying the subject of women in ministry. Other than some special pamphlets, no effort has been made to identify the many articles which have appeared in scholastic journals.

In an effort to put some order into this review, the books are placed under subheads as follows: *The History of Women in Ministry*; *The Issue of Women in Ministry in the Evangelical Free Church of America*; *General Interest Books Concerning Women in Ministry*; *Hermeneutics and Exegesis Associated with Critical Biblical Passages*. Several of the books contain information which can be reviewed under more than one subhead, but will be considered under the subhead which seems to be most appropriate.

The History of Women in Ministry

A Woman God Can Lead

by Alice Mathews

This book is designed for follow-up group discussion, and deals with lessons which may be learned by studying the lives of women in the Bible. Although not written to deal with issues which are being debated in the church today, the book makes several points which are pertinent to the debate.

In discussing the Genesis accounts of the creation of man and woman, Alice Mathews makes an excellent point concerning God's intent to have the man and the woman share an "essential identity":

Have you ever wondered why God switched methods of creation when He had the other one down pat? Up to this point God had made living organisms from the ground. In verse 9 He made the trees grow out of the ground. In verse 7 He made man from the dust of the earth. In verse 19 He formed all of the animals and birds from the ground. You'd think, once He had a good method going, He'd stick with it. No. God introduced a new method, one that would remove all shadow of doubt that the man and the woman shared an essential identity.³⁹

God, in creating Eve from Adam's body, confers a greater degree of equality between the man and the woman than if He had made Eve from the dust of the earth as a separate being. It would seem that God intended for people to recognize that men and women are the same at the core of their existence. This fact does not deny that God allowed for some

³⁹Alice Mathews, *A Woman God Can Lead: Lessons from the Bible help you make today's choices* (Grand Rapids: Discovery House Publishers, 1998), 7.

physiological and emotional differences. It does seem to refute, however, any thought that women are inferior to men in their essence.

As Mathews examines the lives of women in the Bible, she makes another interesting point concerning how God chose to use a woman to deliver his word in a critical situation when he could have used a man:

A number of prophets lived in Jerusalem at that time... Does it seem strange, then, that in 2 Kings 22:14 we read that Hilkiyah the priest and the rest of the king's counselors turned to a *woman* for an explanation of the word of the Lord? They sought out Huldah, a prophetess who was the wife of Shallum, the keeper of the royal wardrobe.

Sometimes we hear the statement that God is forced to use women to do men's work when no men are available. People use that reasoning to excuse work that women have done on the mission field. It is hard to support that idea from the text. God had given a special spiritual gift to the woman Huldah, and then God used her to speak His message both to the high priest and to the king.⁴⁰

It seems appropriate to acknowledge that God used a woman to deliver his message at a time when the testimony of a woman may have been questioned. Many today do not wish to hear God's word delivered by a woman. At least at the time of Huldah, God did not hesitate to use a woman for this purpose.

Mathews makes one more point which is relevant to the subject of women in ministry and worthy of attention. Regarding the woman in Proverbs 31, it should be noted that in verse 26 she is described as speaking with "wisdom" and giving "faithful instruction." Mathews writes:

It is one thing to learn principles of wise management of time, resources, and gifts. It is another thing to learn to be a wise counselor. Where can we go to learn that? The key lies in the

⁴⁰Ibid., 134-135.

last of verse 30: "a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised."⁴¹

Proverbs 31 makes it seem appropriate for "a woman who fears the Lord" to instruct others. Should she be limited to instructing only children and other women? That question is not answered in Proverbs 31. However, there is no limitation indicated on whom a woman should instruct.

Women in the Bible

by Mary Evans

As with the previous book, *Women in the Bible* limits discussion of women in ministry to those in the Old and New Testaments. Different from Mathews' book, which is designed to encourage and challenge women to learn from the examples set by women in the Bible, Evans' book has the purpose of urging the church of today to reexamine its attitude toward women in ministry in light of the way God used women in Biblical times.

Evans makes an excellent point when she discusses the creation of Eve from Adam's rib:

The point of emphasizing that the whole of mankind came from one ancestor is that it establishes both the absolute unity of humanity, and the identical substance of both male and female, in a way that could never be true if there had been separate creations from dust.

Woman is created from the rib of the man, but it is important to note that it was the direct creative act of God in building up the rib that gave the woman her being, not the rib itself... It is wrong to say that woman owes all her existence to man, just as it would be wrong to say that man owes all his existence to dust and is therefore

⁴¹Ibid., 171.

subordinate to it.⁴²

Although Evans' book can be seen as dealing with the historical setting for women in the Bible, it also presents excellent exegetical commentary on some of the more difficult passages in Paul's writings. Particularly impressive are her comments and analysis dealing with I Corinthians 11:2-16. She sums up her exegesis with these words:

Thus Paul in this chapter is supporting the equality of women in worship and their full participation in prayer and prophecy. He points out that this equality does not imply a necessity for a false identity between the sexes, and that there is no reason therefore to overthrow any conventions of dress that emphasize their distinction. It must be noted that basically Paul is supporting the status quo in terms of conventions. There is possibly a built-in principle of liberation within this chapter but Paul does not argue here for a quick removal of the subordination or the inferiority of women in society.⁴³

Without going into the details of her lengthy exegesis of I Corinthians 14:34-36 and I Timothy 2:8-15, suffice it to say that she ably defends an egalitarian interpretation of these verses, too. Some of her thoughts are not new, but many are quite fresh. In any case, she makes points which are worthy of careful consideration.

Daughters of the Church

by Ruth A Tucker and Walter Liefeld

Tucker and Liefeld have written a comprehensive volume which describes how women throughout church history have used

⁴²Mary Evans, *Women in the Bible*, 2d ed. (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1983), 15-16.

⁴³*Ibid.*, 94-95.

their God-given gifts in ministry. In addition to this primary body of information, the book contains three appendices which deal with issues critical to the current debate about women in ministry. Appendix A discusses "Hermeneutics and Theology" as these studies are relevant to the subject. Appendix B deals with "Exegetical Issues" concerning pertinent Bible passages, and Appendix C focuses on the issues of "Ordination and Authority."

In their description of women serving the church through the years, Tucker and Liefeld describe how early Baptists had women preachers as early as the 1630s,⁴⁴ and John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist movement, encouraged women to preach during his ministry in England.⁴⁵

As for Fredrik Franson, a man who was very influential in the Free Church movement in the United States, Tucker and Liefeld state that he advocated a "limited ministry" for women.⁴⁶ As will be seen in the next section, it is possible that Tucker and Liefeld incorrectly interpreted Franson's thoughts based on an examination of the context in which they were made.

There are several statements in this book which recount resistance to women in ministry, and the reasons for it, during the period when Evangelical Free churches were growing in the United States. In the 1880s, the Southern Baptists considered women in leadership of mission societies as problematic because they associated the desire of women to

⁴⁴Ruth A. Tucker and Walter Liefeld, 224.

⁴⁵Ibid., 242.

⁴⁶Ibid., 389.

serve in this capacity as related to the Women's Rights Movement.⁴⁷ During the early 1940s, John R. Rice, a "fundamental radio preacher and evangelist," stated that he did not "doubt that millions will go to Hell because of the unscriptural practice of women preachers."⁴⁸ By the 1970s and 1980s the fear among conservative Christians that "misguided" social activists were affecting the church brought about restrictive reactions. Tucker and Liefeld see evangelical disagreement with proponents of the feminist movement as driving the efforts to limit the activities of women in the church. They note the following situations which occurred in the 1970s and 1980s:

...the issue of women in the church became a hotly debated topic that often created splits in individual churches and denominations. Seminaries and Bible colleges continued to bar women from certain exclusively male areas of study, and mission boards tightened their restrictions on women, who had long been involved in extensive teaching and preaching ministries overseas. The stricter controls on women's ministry among evangelicals appears to have developed largely as a reaction to the feminist movement.⁴⁹

As a final thought on the controversies described by Tucker and Liefeld, the following words are of particular interest - especially in light of the doctrinal positions held by members of the EFCA:

One sometimes hears it said...that it is impossible to allow the ordination of women and still hold to Biblical inerrancy, or that to approve such ordination one must be either exegetically incompetent or disobedient to Scripture. It would seem that differences in opinion concerning such matters as baptism, escha-

⁴⁷Ibid., 313.

⁴⁸Ibid., 14.

⁴⁹Ibid., 399.

tology, and the Calvinist-Arminian debate are often tolerated more graciously than differences about women.⁵⁰

This final thought was confirmed through statements made by EFCA leaders on the survey forms mentioned in chapter one. The EFCA has always taken pride in the fact that we "major on the majors, and minor on the minors." Based on responses to be considered in the final chapter, some EFCA leaders seem to think that any proposal to allow women to be ordained pastors is in the category of a "major" issue.

Ungodly Women: Gender and the First Wave of
American Fundamentalism

by Betty A. DeBerg

In this book, DeBerg defends her proposition that American fundamentalists used their understanding of Biblical interpretation to attempt to preserve Victorian family values during the period 1880 to 1930. She fills the book with many interesting quotations from the period, but seems to derive more from what was said or written than may have been intended by the speakers or authors.

The following paragraph from DeBerg's book clearly states her thesis:

The history of the fundamentalist movement in the late nineteenth-and early twentieth-century America has been told from the perspective of issues preeminent in the public theological debates between 1880 and 1930. This set of essential theological issues most often included Dispensational premillennialism, Biblical inerrancy, evolution, and modernism. Yet accounts of fundamentalism that have concentrated on these or a range of other issues associated with antimodernism have consistently ignored the impact on theology of

⁵⁰Ibid., 448.

the disruptions in gender roles that occurred during the period. Fundamentalists were profoundly affected by the dismantling of the Victorian gender ideology. Acknowledgment of and reaction to those strains on gender-role conventions were part and parcel of fundamentalist theological formulations, whether *ostensibly* [emphasis mine] concerned with the end of time, the truth of the Bible, or the dangers of evolutionary theory and modern theology.⁵¹

DeBerg raises legitimate questions about how issues in society concerning women and families actually affected the preaching and teaching of fundamentalists just before and after the turn of the century. In doing so, however, she seems to question the motives of the men who were foremost in the debates which ensued. The fundamentalists at the turn of the century were primarily interested in dispensational theology, Biblical inerrancy, the arguments of evolutionists, and other issues. The "disruptions in gender roles" and "Victorian gender ideology" were truly secondary to these other issues. Then, as today, many fundamentalists and evangelicals were (are) emotionally involved in their arguments concerning a women's role in the church and the family. That does not mean they were not then (or are not now) sincere about other arguments.

No Time For Silence

by Janette Hassey

Dr. Hassey's book dealing with "evangelical women in public ministry around the turn-of-the-century" does not present the fear of losing Victorian morals as the primary

⁵¹Betty A. DeBerg, *Ungodly Women: Gender and the First Wave of American Fundamentalism* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 119.

reason fundamentalists resisted greater freedom for women in the church. She does see, however, that fundamentalists and evangelicals were concerned for "survival of the traditional family and of the entire social order."⁵² In describing their concern, Hassey does not imply that fundamentalists and evangelicals were not sincere in their interpretation of Scripture which, in their minds, limited the role of women in the church. Indeed, Hassey presents a more balanced view than does DeBerg. The following are reasons Hassey cites for resistance to women in ministry around the turn-of-the-century:

What can account for the gradual decline of public ministry opportunities for Evangelical women between the World Wars? First, Fundamentalist separatist subcultures emerged which tended to harden on the women's issue. Second, as Fundamentalism increasingly institutionalized, women were squeezed out of leadership roles. Third, the conservative Protestant backlash against changing social values resulted in restrictions on women in ministry. Finally, a more literalist view of Scripture among Fundamentalists meant less flexibility in interpreting a topic like women in ministry.⁵³

As a further indication that Hassey sees turn-of-the-century fundamentalists being sincere in their theology, while arguing to restrict women in ministry, consider the following:

Unfortunately, the current association of women's freedom to minister with this mainstream or liberal Protestantism and linkage of restrictions on women with Fundamentalism can distort the turn-of-the-century picture. Additionally, Protestant groups in the Evangelical camp a century ago may

⁵²Janette Hassey, *No Time for Silence: Evangelical women in public ministry around the turn of the century* (Grand Rapids: Academic Books, 1986), 141.

⁵³*Ibid.*, 137.

have since shifted toward Liberalism. A careful analysis of turn-of-the-century literature reveals Evangelical women preached and entered pastorates more frequently than assumed today, in numbers often lacking in mainstream churches. Fundamentalists were not inevitably the ones to oppose women's ordination.⁵⁴

Hassey develops an interesting point concerning a restrictive view of Scripture, which she acknowledges did emerge among evangelicals and fundamentalists, as she discusses the writings of B. T. Roberts in 1891:

More than the previous authors, Roberts emphasized the parallels between slavery and the women's issue. Staunch defenders of slavery considered that institution God-ordained. Did not Biblical examples of slaves and Paul's teachings constitute a universal, permanent principle of slave subordination? Likewise, ardent advocates of women's subordination interpreted Paul's instructions on women as equally permanent and universal. Roberts argued that just as opponents of abolition who appealed to the Bible were so greatly mistaken on slavery, so too were the opponents of women's ordination.⁵⁵

No Time For Silence is an excellent historical study.

**The Issue of Women in Ministry
in
The Evangelical Free Church of America**

What it Means to Be Free

by Calvin B. Hanson

In addition to historical information about EFCA women in ministry, this book contains valuable information about how EFCA people have always tried to keep matters in

⁵⁴Ibid., 48-49.

⁵⁵Ibid., 103.

perspective and avoid acrimony over issues which are not related to the twelve point Statement of Faith. As previously suggested, however, acrimony does seem to be a part of any discussion of women in ministry among EFCA people.

What Does the Scripture Teach About the
Ordination of Women?

by Walter L. Liefeld, Douglas Moo, and
Philip B. Payne

In the latter half of the 1980s, the Committee on Ministerial Standing of the EFCA asked Liefeld, Moo, and Payne to prepare papers presenting the two major viewpoints on the subject of the ordination of women. Their papers were published in this booklet, with a separate paper by Payne being made available at a later date.

Liefeld's paper presents general arguments in favor of the ordination of women. Moo's paper argues against such ordination based on his exegesis of I Timothy 2:11-15, and Payne's paper responds to Moo's arguments. The final chapter contains Moo's response to Payne's response. Another paper by Payne, which presents a final response to Moo, is available under separate cover.

In his arguments which support the ordination of women, Liefeld points out the significance of ordination in the EFCA. (Based on comments received in the survey, some EFCA pastors may not agree with Liefeld's view.) Liefeld writes:

In the Evangelical Free Church, ordination is an orderly way of designating those whom God has called to ministry. Such "privilege" as ordination may confer in the Free Church is not the same as the exclusive right some denominations confer to preside in certain sacramental rites or to exercise

governing authority over the church, a practice that has no precedent in Scripture. Recognition of those who are gifted and qualified for ministry in the Free Church has, therefore, Biblical precedence. It should not be transformed into bestowal of personal authority, whether of women or of men.⁵⁶

In developing their arguments concerning women speaking and teaching in the churches of Corinth and Ephesus, Liefeld and Moo demonstrate just how far apart two scholars can be in judging the cultural dynamics which may have influenced Paul's message to the churches in those cities.

Liefeld writes as follows concerning I Corinthians 11:

What we may not realize is that not only women's appearance, but even the very act of their speaking publicly had serious implications in first century society (and not merely at Corinth or Ephesus). Plutarch, who lived in apostolic times, said that it was equally shameful for a woman to speak in public and to have a bare arm. We need to realize that in Paul's day, a woman speaking and teaching in the church could appear to signify a moral problem and bring shame on the church and on the Lord, keeping people from Christ. That is simply not true in most societies today. In fact, the situation is reversed: to *prohibit* a woman from having the same dignity and opportunity in church as she does in society is a stumbling block to many people.⁵⁷

Moo writes on the subject of women teaching at that time in Ephesus:

...it may be that his limitation is given with a view to the attitudes of pagans, who would have looked askance at women teaching in meetings. But, in fact, it is difficult to envisage such objections from pagans in light of the attitude toward women in the Hellenistic world. As Swidler points out, this attitude must be distinguished from the Jewish view, which was considerably more conservative, and from the outlook characteristic of the fifth and fourth century Athens. In the

⁵⁶Walter L. Liefeld, Douglas Moo, and Philip B. Payne, 6.

⁵⁷Ibid., 11.

Hellenistic period, the status of women had improved "...so vigorously and continually that one must speak of a women's liberation movement which had massive and manifold liberating impact on the lot of women..." Women played a prominent role in many of the mystery religions and, to cite evidence more directly relevant for the text under discussion, the cult of Artemis in Ephesus was well-known for the many priestesses who officiated at the great Temple... Thus, there is little that can be discerned in the atmosphere of Hellenistic Ephesus which would have caused anyone to take a critical view of women teaching or officiating in Christian worship services.⁵⁸

Readers must decide which scholar presents the most convincing argument. Making such a decision is very important because one's understanding of why Paul wrote as he did to the two churches is based in part on how one evaluates cultural effects on the churches. Those who see the cultural situation as important, and as Liefeld described it, will interpret Paul's instructions in I Corinthians 11 and 14 and I Timothy 2 as primarily applicable in principle. Those who see the cultural situation as Moo described it will interpret Paul's instructions as normative.

Moo clearly does understand Paul's instructions to the church in Ephesus, as found in I Timothy 2:11-15, to be normative - applicable to what women should or should not do in Christian churches today. Part of Moo's conclusion reads as follows:

Women are not to teach men nor to have authority over men because such activity would violate the structure of created sexual relationships and would involve the woman in something for which she is not suited (emphasis mine).⁵⁹

In arriving at this conclusion, Moo makes statements

⁵⁸Ibid., 38.

⁵⁹Ibid., 39.

about I Timothy 2:9-15 which must not be clearly stated, or his point about the relationship of "good works" to salvation does not conform to evangelical theology:

Positively, the view that regards v 15 as a specification of the role through which women experience salvation admirably suits the context of vv 9-14, where the issue is obviously the proper sphere of women's activities. Moreover, such an interpretation finds support in the larger context, for a frequently recurring motif in the Pastoral Epistles is the need for Christian women to devote themselves to the care of homes and the raising of children (I Tim. 5:9-10, 5:14; Titus 3:4-5). Such advice was clearly needed as an antidote to the false teachers, who counseled abstention from marriage (I Tim. 4:3) and generally, it seems, sought to denigrate those virtues and activities which Paul regarded as fitting for Christian women.

Finally, this view satisfies the linguistic evidence better than any other. σωζω retains its natural Pauline sense, deliverance from sin and its condemning power, perhaps especially here in the ultimate, eschatological sense. διά will indicate not the ultimate cause, but the efficient cause: τεκνογονία is one of those "good works" (v 10) *through which the Christian woman preserves her place in the salvific scheme* (emphasis mine)...⁶⁰

Payne also questions Moo's meaning:

It is difficult to see how Moo's interpretation is consistent with Paul's basic position that salvation is through grace by faith alone. It is hard to imagine Paul saying that τεκνογονία or any other "good works" are the "efficient cause...of deliverance from sin and its condemning power..."⁶¹

Moo responds to this critique as follows:

Payne's questioning of the possibility that διά can mean "efficient cause" appears to arise from a problem of nomenclature. By "efficient cause," I, following M. Harris, intended to denote "the medium through which an action passes before its accomplishment." Gal. 5:6 is a good example of

⁶⁰Ibid., 28-29.

⁶¹Ibid., 51.

this usage of *διά*: "The only thing that counts is faith working through (*διά*) love." Understood in this sense, the preposition suggests the idea of mediation, a usage consistently supported in the grammars.⁶²

Based on Moo's reasoning, using Gal. 5:6 as an example, I Timothy 2:15 would read: *But women will be saved by grace through faith working through childbearing - if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety.* Even this interpretation stretches Paul's foundational teaching concerning salvation.

The majority of the discussions in Moo's and Payne's papers is devoted to scholarly arguments about syntax, hermeneutics, and grammar. Those who are interested in the more technical aspects of the debate over women in ministry should read these papers.

A Woman of Her Times

by Della Olson

This fascinating little book should be read by everyone who is a leader in the EFCA. Dr. Arnold T. Olson, Mrs. Olson's husband, was president of the EFCA for many years, Dr. and Mrs. Olson are remembered and highly respected by Free Church people.

The subtitle of Mrs. Olson's book is *Stories of women who dared to place obedience to the commands of Christ above submission to the traditions of men.* Although this subtitle makes the book sound as if it is a polemic against those who would deny women the right to pursue certain ministries in the church, it is not. Instead, it simply and graciously

⁶²Ibid., 79.

recounts stories about Free Church women who served as evangelists, pastors and leaders in the early days of the Free Church movement in the United States. Of course, Olson traces the history of the events in the United States back to its Scandinavian roots, and describes how people like Philip Spener, the founder of Pietism, and Frederik Franson, a key figure in the Free Church movement, both helped to encourage women to take active parts in ministries which were not normally open to women.

The following quotes from Olson's book give some idea as to the extent of the ministry women had in Free Churches beginning in the 1880s:

It had always been true that God firmly laid his hand on women and they testified for Him, but women preachers were heretofore unheard of in Norway. After 1884 there would even be an organized commissioning. At the time Den Norske Missionsforbund celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary it had twenty-four *preachers* and *one-third of them were women* (emphasis mine).⁶³

Catherine Juell of Norway was probably the foremost Christian worker among all the women of Scandinavia. This was no young idealist but a mature woman over fifty years of age with ability for organization. When Franson needed helpers in Denmark she was the only woman he called to be one of his assistants. One of her great gifts was in dealing with souls at "after-meetings." As an evangelist she "drew large crowds and many came to the Lord through her earnest preaching."⁶⁴

Their popularity (*women as pastors and revival leaders in the United States*) may have been one reason for one of the critics of the movement saying,

It went so far that at one Sunday service about ten of us preachers sat listening to one woman preach.⁶⁵

⁶³Olson, 23-24.

⁶⁴Ibid., 34.

⁶⁵Ibid., 44.

(Report taken from *The Chicago Bladet* which published the views of Free Church men on the subject *"Does God's Word permit a woman to preach, participate in all Christian work and have the right to a voice in the affairs and decisions of the congregation?"* The arguments were voiced at a 1888 conference, and there were voices on both sides of the issue. The words of John G. Princell, early Free Church pastor and leader, are particularly interesting.)

PRINCELL: Some have tried to limit the apostle's statement about women keeping silent by saying it was made because they were babbling, engaging in small talk or gossiping. This is not correct because the same terminology is used about Jesus and He never babbled or gossiped. One cannot squeeze the words to wring out more meaning than is there. Neither can one qualify these words by saying Paul made a mistake. No, the words are God's not just Paul's. But we must consider them in the setting of the times in which they were written. It is possible the words were correct for the customs of that time. It might be compared to foot-washing...⁶⁶

The above quotations from Olson's book give a much better understanding of just how women were allowed to minister in the Free Church movement in Scandinavia and the United States during the last twenty years of the nineteenth century and into the early years of this century. Nothing is proved by recounting this history to help resolve the current Biblical debate about how women should be allowed to serve in ministry. It does seem significant, however, that the men who were respected leaders in the Free Church movement supported the ministry of the women who answered the "subjective" (as some see it) call of the Holy Spirit to be pastors and evangelists in the early churches. Olson's book

⁶⁶Ibid., 70.

is very useful in helping readers understand Evangelical Free church history in regard to the current debate.

Prophesying Daughters

by Fredrik Franson

Two quotations from Franson reveal exactly what he believed, laying to rest the assumption (made by some) that he was inconsistent in his position on women being allowed to preach. Read his words carefully. He wants to affirm women in preaching ministries while at the same time protecting them from divisive controversy.

But God has teachers installed in the church, apostles (such as Barnabas, Acts 14:14, and present-day missionaries), prophets, evangelists, *pastors* (emphasis mine), and miracle workers--and *in no sense can women be excluded from these offices* (emphasis mine).⁶⁷

One thing, however, all missionary sisters in the homeland must be careful about, and that is not to try, especially publicly, to *defend* preaching by women. As soon as they do that, they appear as teachers on a controversial question and enter thereby into an area where their place, to say the least, is ambiguous. It is enough that they themselves have assurance in their own hearts of the Word of God, that they have the right to evangelize and don't need much discussion of the subject. If mission houses or churches are for the time being closed to them, they should take that from God, for it will help them to come to those places where the needs are greatest and which would otherwise be neglected if much attendance at meetings were required of them.⁶⁸

Free Church people have not agreed about whether or not women should be pastors and have authority in their churches

⁶⁷Fredrik Franson, *Prophesying Daughters* (St. Paul: Bible Women's Home Publishers, 1896), 38-39.

⁶⁸*Ibid.*, 40.

for over a hundred years. From the above writings, however, it is clear that many of the founders and subsequent leaders of the movement did approve of women preachers and pastors. The modern policy against the ordination of women as pastors has been established, but the debate goes on.

General Interest Books Concerning Women in Ministry

The six books to be reviewed in this section contain a variety of information related to women in ministry. Most of them, to some degree, deal with the hermeneutics and exegesis of Hebrew and Greek passages in the Bible. For the purposes of this paper, however, the focus is on the fact that they were not written for the primary purpose of interpreting specific passages in the Bible. This proviso notwithstanding, these books have been very widely read by all who are seriously interested in this subject

Man and Woman in Biblical Perspective

by James B. Hurley

Hurley's book has been very influential in scholarly circles. Almost every book written on the subject of women in ministry during the past eighteen years refers to Hurley's work. The book is especially appreciated by those with a "traditional" view of how women should relate to men in marriage and in the church.

A few quotations from this book make it very clear what Hurley thinks about the matters under consideration.

Paul taught the Corinthians that the appointive headship of the man applied in worship as well as

in the home. The new freedom of the Christian during times of worship did not overthrow, but rather stood alongside a pattern of male leadership in the church itself. The newness of the kingdom did not do away with the *creational patterns* (emphasis mine) but called for their genuine fulfillment.⁶⁹

We conclude, therefore, that Paul intended that women should not be authoritative teachers in the church (a reference to I Timothy 2:12).⁷⁰

In the light of our consideration of I Timothy 2 and 3, I conclude that Paul taught that the office of elder/bishop/presbyter was restricted to men. He felt that the *creational pattern* (emphasis mine) of male headship in both home and church required that women should not exercise spiritual oversight of the flock. They could not be in positions of authoritative teaching or exercising discipline over men. He grounded his view in the relationship of the man and his wife before the fall (although we have noted that it continued beyond it) rather than on relationships established as a result of the fall of Adam. He did not make an appeal to cultural factors such as the relative lack of education for women or the response which outsiders might have to women in positions of responsibility.⁷¹

Although not specifically stated above, Hurley bases his conclusion that women should not teach or have authority over men in the church on the "order of creation" - Adam was created first. This is a recurring theme in the writings of all of those who hold the "traditional" view. Although God did create Adam first, it does not follow that Adam must, as a consequence, have authority over Eve in the home and in the church. This is not stated nor even implicit in the Genesis

⁶⁹James B. Hurley, *Man and Woman in Biblical Perspective* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1981: reprint, Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1981), 184 (page citations are to the reprint edition).

⁷⁰*Ibid.*, 201.

⁷¹*Ibid.*, 233.

passages about creation. The conclusion drawn from the "order of creation" passage in Genesis is a non sequitur.

Hurley has been followed in his opinions by several scholars in recent years. The next book in this review, however, draws opposite conclusions from those of Hurley.

Women at the Crossroads

by Kari Torjesen Malcolm

Kari Torjesen Malcolm is of Norwegian descent, grew up in a missionary home, was imprisoned by the Japanese during World War II, is a pastor's wife, and was a member of an Evangelical Free Church. With this unique background, she has written a book which presents her theological understanding of women in ministry as part of her experiences in life. This is a gentle book. It comes from the heart of one who wants to serve her Lord more than anything else.

This book can be evaluated by reading one paragraph, which reads as follows:

We have seen in this book how some women have begun to function as catalysts for change, as prophetic voices, and as healing agents because of their love for Jesus Christ. They have discovered that as they took the first tiny steps of faith, their gifts have been identified and new doors have been opened for a wider ministry. Such women are needed now in the eleventh hour when our world cries for every believer to participate in the great harvest.⁷²

Malcolm believes that women should be allowed to use their gifts, including gifts associated with preaching and teaching, so as to fulfill the Great Commission. She

⁷²Kari Torjesen Malcolm, *Women at the Crossroads: A path beyond feminism and traditionalism* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1982), 196.

believes that the Scriptures allow and even encourage this activity.

Beyond the Curse

by Aida Besancon Spencer

Dr. Spencer's book is difficult to classify. It contains much which is scholarly and based on the original languages of the Bible. Nevertheless, this book is considered one of general interest because it contains more than arguments concerning specific passages. The following lengthy paragraph deals with Spencer's hermeneutical and exegetical work in the I Timothy 2:11-15 passage as an example of her conclusions concerning women in ministry:

Women are to become part of the entire educational process - one of "silence." Women are to be calm and to have restraint and respect and affirm their teachers rather than to engage in an autocratic authority which destroys its subjects. Paul here is not prohibiting women from preaching nor praying nor having an edifying authority nor pastoring. He is simply prohibiting them from teaching and using their authority in a destructive way. The overall purpose of the letter to remedy the teaching of different doctrines, the positive connotations for "silence," the use of the present active indicative for "I am not allowing," the use of the adversative particle "but," and the underlying principle that learning results in teaching--all imply that Paul's injunction is not solely relevant to the first century. Rather, it is applicable whenever, but only whenever, women who have not been theologically trained are succumbing to false teachings.⁷³

The above paragraph is an excellent summary of many pages of theological argumentation. Most of the author's

⁷³Aida Besancon Spencer, *Beyond the Curse: Women called to ministry* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, Inc., Publishers, 1985; reprint, Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1997), 88 (page citation is to the reprint edition).

arguments are very convincing.

Women, Authority & the Bible

Edited by Alvera Mickelsen

Twenty-six evangelical scholars and leaders contributed to this book after they had participated in the Evangelical Colloquium on Women and the Bible held in Oak Brook, Illinois in 1984.

The book is divided into major sections with essays in each section. The essays are prepared by one of the authors and each is accompanied by two or more responses written by other scholars. Most of the scholars entertain egalitarian views.

The major sections include essays on topics such as *Biblical Authority*, *Biblical Views of Authority and Headship*, and *Difficult Passages*.

J.I.Packer, a well known scholar, makes the following statement in his essay which seems to summarize much of what the book is about:

...while it would be inept euphoria to claim that all the exegetical questions tackled have now been finally resolved, I think the New Testament papers in particular make it evident that the burden of proof regarding the exclusion of women from the office of teaching and ruling within the congregation now lies on those who maintain the exclusion rather than on those who challenge it.⁷⁴

It may well be that a comment such as the above by a scholar as influential as J. I. Packer helped to inspire

⁷⁴J.I. Packer, "Understanding the Differences" in *Women, Authority and the Bible*, ed. Alvera Mickelsen (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1986), 298.

books such as *Recovering Biblical Manhood & Womanhood* and *Women in the Church*.

It seems appropriate to reflect upon the concerns of Timothy Weber as stated in his response to an essay by Joan Flikkema:

Academic types may actually believe that everything is going to be determined by the parsing of Greek verbs or what we can discover about first-century Greek culture. But for most people, such matters are simply beside the point. More important to them are personal concerns such as self-image, sexuality and relationships. There are people on both sides of this question who will not change their minds no matter how cogent or persuasive the exegetical arguments because they personally have too much at stake in the outcome. There is a lot riding on this issue, including how husbands and wives relate to each other and how people view themselves as males and females.... Until we get people to face up to these kinds of issues, we may be wasting our time.

This hidden agenda forces us to consider the role of the local pastor in the change process.... Change will most likely occur when pastors of local churches decide to stand up and tell their people that this is an important issue--then find ways to help people come to their own conclusions...⁷⁵

Based on the results of our survey, it doesn't appear that pastors in the EFCA are likely "to stand up and tell their people that this is an important issue."

Equal to Serve

by Gretchen Gaebelein Hull

In this book, Gretchen Hull presents strong arguments supporting the position that women should be allowed to serve in the same roles as men in church ministry. The book is

⁷⁵Timothy P. Weber, "Response: Strategies for change:being a Christian change agent," in *Women, Authority and the Bible*, ed. Alvera Mickelsen (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1986), 281-282.

enhanced by three appendices. Appendix I, by Alvera Mickelsen, is a satire which will make egalitarians smile and traditionalists frown. Appendix II, prepared by Dr. Sanford Hull, contains an excellent analysis of scholarly views on the "hard passages" in Scripture which relate to women in ministry. Appendix III, by Dr. Catherine Kroeger, identifies many places in classical Greek writings where the concept of "head" (as used in I Cor. 11:3) is best described by the word "source" in English. This book is challenging, if not provocative.

Hull identifies concerns she and others have with changing or not changing the "traditional" views held by many evangelicals.

They [Hull's friends] recognized that women were gifted both in Bible times and today, but they felt reluctant to acknowledge this fact openly, for fear that allowing all women to use their gifts freely would lead to confusion of the sexes. They had an underlying fear that if too many women stepped outside the "female" role, wholesale "role reversal" and social chaos would result.⁷⁶

As had been the case with the reasoning behind racial segregation, the traditionalists explanation of the "female" role made a mockery of women's full humanity, women's full citizenship, and women's full redemption. Under all the clever verbiage, "spiritually equal but functionally subordinate" was still an endorsement of male domination.⁷⁷

After reading many books published in the last few years on the subject of women in ministry, one can identify with Hull and come to the conclusion that the traditionalist words

⁷⁶Gretchen Gaebelein Hull, *Equal to Serve: Women and men working together revealing the Gospel* (Old Tappan: Fleming H. Revell, 1987; reprint, Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998), 120 (page citation is to the reprint edition).

⁷⁷*Ibid.*, 121-122.

"spiritually equal but functionally subordinate" must be insulting to many women--especially those who believe that God would have them use their gifts for ministry as men do.

Women in the Church: A Biblical Theology
of Women in Ministry

by Stanley J. Grenz with Denise Muir Kjesbo

Grenz and Kjesbo also look at Biblical and historical information concerning women in ministry. They, too, focus on concerns which should be addressed in churches today.

In discussing I Corinthians 11:3-16, Grenz presents a common egalitarian interpretation of that passage:

The text therefore does not lay a foundation for eliminating women from leadership in the church. Paul places no restrictions on the breadth of women's use of their gifts in public worship. He speaks only to the demeanor in which women are to serve, as those mindful of cultural sensibilities concerning male-female relations. The apostle cautions the Corinthians lest the manner in which women ministered might violate cultural norms and therefore bring the gospel into ill repute.⁷⁸

It is difficult for a pastor who is not a Biblical scholar, to consider the nuances of culture and language in translating a passage from Greek to English, without relying on what the scholars have to say. But, a careful reading on exegetical problems associated with I Corinthians 11:3-16, leads one to agree with Grenz's conclusions about this passage.

⁷⁸Stanley J. Grenz with Denise Muir Kjesbo, *Women in the Church: A Biblical Theology of Women in Ministry* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1995), 117.

Hermeneutics and Exegesis Associated with Critical Biblical Passages

The books considered next are more directly concerned with hermeneutics and exegesis than with the history of women in ministry or current difficulties associated with such ministry. Once again, these books are listed in the order in which they came on the market. By addressing them in this order, one can discern how issues became more defined as authors responded to one another.

Women in Ministry: Four Views

Edited by Bonnidell Clouse and Robert G. Clouse

This book offers the extreme views and two moderate views on the issue of women in ministry. Robert D. Culver takes a very strong traditional view. Susan Foh takes a traditional view, but is more moderate--and certainly more courteous in presenting her views. Walter Liefeld takes a moderate egalitarian view, and Alvera Mickelsen defends the stronger egalitarian view.

One only needs to read the following quotation to realize that Dr. Culver has strong views. Culver apparently approves of a statement made by Bengel about Eve being deceived in the Garden of Eden:

"The deception indicates a lesser ability in comprehension, and so this limitation is why it is not allowable for a woman to teach".... At the present day we could hardly find a more vivid illustration of the essential difference between masculine and feminine nature.⁷⁹

⁷⁹Robert D. Culver, "Women in Ministry: a Traditional View," in *Women in Ministry: Four Views*, ed. Bonnidell Clouse and Robert G. Clouse (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1989), 37.

This is an insulting and condescending view of women. Given scientific proof to the contrary, such statements indicate a judgmental attitude which is inappropriate in a scholarly debate.

Foh rightly disagrees with Culver:

I disagree with Culver's understanding of Adam and Eve as archetypes expressing man-ness and woman-ness. He sees I Timothy 2:14 as teaching about the nature of woman (more easily deceived) as distinguished from the nature of man.... One might also ask whether women, if they are by nature more easily deceived, should be allowed to teach children or other women.⁸⁰

Foh also offers a view of Genesis 3:16 which has become associated with her name:

The battle of the sexes is the result of sin and the judgment on it for the woman. The woman's willing submission is replaced by a desire to control her husband. Consequently, to maintain his headship the husband must fight for it.⁸¹

Dr. Liefeld summarizes his observations concerning Paul's restrictions on women in I Timothy 2:12 by saying he believes that women in the church at Ephesus were victims of false teachers, uneducated, considered to be unreliable witnesses, influenced by early gnosticizing tendencies, and limited by Greek and Jewish attitudes toward women.⁸² Such explanations for Paul writing as he did are common.

In her discussion of I Timothy 2:12, Mickelsen makes a strong point:

Those who believe that verse 12 forever bars all women of all time from teaching or having authority over men usually ignore the commands in

⁸⁰Foh, 54.

⁸¹Ibid., 75.

⁸²Liefeld, *Women in Ministry*, 148-149.

the other six verses (I Tim. 2:9-15) in this section. This is a classic case of "selective literalism." If this passage is universal for all Christian women of all time, then no woman should ever wear pearls or gold (including wedding rings) or have braided hair or expensive clothing.⁸³

This book presents the spectrum of views normally encountered in books on the subject of women in ministry, and is well worth reading.

Beyond Sex Roles

by Gilbert Bilezikian

Dr. Bilezikian takes a strong egalitarian view in this book. He makes some excellent points, albeit in a somewhat combative tone. (It is amazing how heated this debate over the role of women in the church has become.)

Because traditionalists often use the argument that women must remain in subjection to men due to God's "order of creation" (suggested by I Timothy 2:13 and described in Genesis 2, as they understand these passages), it is well to quote Bilezikian for an alternative view:

Conspicuously absent in Genesis 1-2 is any reference to divine prescriptions for man to exercise authority over women. Due to the importance of its implications, had such an authority structure been part of the creation design, it would have received clear definition along with the two other authority mandates. The total absence of such a commission indicates that it was not a part of God's intent.⁸⁴

⁸³Alvera Mickelsen, "Women in Ministry: An Egalitarian View," in *Women in Ministry: Four Views* ed. Bonnidell Clouse and Robert G. Clouse (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1989), 201.

⁸⁴Gilbert Bilezikian, *Beyond Sex Roles: What the Bible says about a woman's place in church and family*, 2d ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1985), 41.

Bilezikian also presents another argument concerning how Eve was deceived. Basically, he points out that God spoke to Adam about the tree of the knowledge of good and evil when he was not with Eve. Adam subsequently gave the message to Eve. Thus, Eve was less well informed than Adam and was deceived about the "tempter's intentions." The end result of this sequence of events was that Adam, who was better prepared to "denounce the tempter's nefarious work," was not approached, but Eve was approached and was not able to resist the tempter. There is no "hierarchical superiority" suggested in the Scripture text.⁸⁵

An appendix to this book presents a critique of Dr. Wayne Grudem's survey of how the Greek word for "head" is used in non-Biblical literature.⁸⁶ Grudem's survey is designed to support his exegesis of Scripture verses such as I Corinthians 11:3 and Ephesians 5:23 in which the word is used. Grudem responds to Bilezikian and others who have been critical of his survey in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*.⁸⁷ These critiques and responses are examples of how heated the debate over women in ministry has become.

Recovering Biblical Manhood & Womanhood

Edited by John Piper and Wayne Grudem

As far as EFCA people are concerned, this book is by far the most influential book written on the subject of women in ministry. The survey of EFCA people concerning their

⁸⁵Ibid., 43.

⁸⁶Ibid., 215-252.

⁸⁷John Piper and Wayne Grudem, ed., 458-463.

attitudes about ordaining women as pastors included one question which asked respondents to cite books which have influenced their thinking. This book edited by Piper and Grudem is cited far more than any other book. This may be true in part because at least five of the authors teach, or have taught, at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School (TEDS), and EFCA pastors know them. The fact that so many authors of this popular book are, or have been, affiliated with TEDS speaks of the influence this seminary and the EFCA have in convincing people that the traditional view of women in ministry is correct.

The best way to show what this book teaches concerning women in ministry is to quote from chapter 2 which is presented in a question and answer format. Here are the first lines of several answers:

We are concerned not merely with the behavioral roles of men and women but also with the underlying nature of manhood and womanhood themselves.

We are persuaded that the Bible teaches that *only men should be pastors and elders* (emphasis mine).

The most explicit texts relating to the leadership of men in the church are I Timothy 2:11-15; I Corinthians 14:34-36; 11:2-16.

...We are trying to hold precisely these two things in Biblical balance, namely, leadership and servanthood.

When Paul says in I Timothy 2:12, "I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent," we do not understand him to mean an absolute prohibition of all teaching by women.

The reason we believe Paul does not mean for women to be *totally* silent in church is that I Corinthians 11:5 permits women to pray and prophesy

in the church...

Having a spiritual gift is not a warrant to use it however we please.

We do not believe that God genuinely calls women to be pastors.

The contextual basis for this argument (*responsibility of man to lead and teach on the fact that Adam was created first*) in the book of Genesis is the assumption throughout the book that the "firstborn" in a human family has the special right and responsibility of leadership in the family.

We bring up homosexuality because we believe that the feminist minimization of sexual role differentiation contributes to the confusion of sex identity that, especially in the second and third generations, gives rise to more homosexuality in society.⁸⁸

As extensive as the arguments are in this book, they are not persuasive. Rather, the insinuations in various places in this book that feminist attitudes about equality in marriage and the church promote homosexual activity, abortion, and divorce cause some concern as to where this debate about women in ministry is going. It seems clear that emotions are running high on both sides of this debate about how women may serve in the church. If this is so, it is all the more disappointing in the Evangelical Free Church which has taken pride in being able to disagree over "non-essential" theological matters without engaging in heated arguments.

Many of those who subscribe to the teachings of this book have signed a document which takes an opposing position to the *Men, Women & Biblical Equality* document cited in the first chapter. Appendix 2 lists those who signed *The Danvers*

⁸⁸Ibid., 60-82.

Statement. Many of them are well known to Free Church people. They include: Gleason Archer, Wayne Grudem, S. Lewis Johnson, Douglas Moo, and Raymond Ortlund. Further, the following familiar seminary professors are listed as being on the Board of Reference: Harold O. J. Brown, D. A. Carson, Carl F. H. Henry, and Thomas McComisky. Of course, there are many more well known names on both lists, but the above named men have taught most EFCA pastors, and had opportunities to influence their thinking.

Paul, Women & Wives

by Craig S. Keener

Dr. Keener's book is perhaps the most logical presentation of the egalitarian view in this literature review. Keener is both a New Testament Biblical scholar and a minister. With this background, his arguments are scholarly and pastoral. He is able to develop an argument in technical terms while interjecting personal illustrations which speak of a compassionate understanding of the issues. Some authors included in this review are also pastors as well as scholars, but Keener, does the best job of developing an argument with a tender attitude toward those who may have more at stake in the debate than he does. Here are some of the core thoughts in his arguments.

In reference to the "head coverings" Paul talks about in I Corinthians 11:2-16, Keener writes:

...for the sake of argument, let us assume that "head" here means "authority," which I believe Grudem has shown is a possible nuance of the term. If Paul is using "head" in the sense of "authority," he could simply mean that the husband was the one in the position of authority over the

wife in that culture, without demonstrating that all husbands are to rule over their wives in all cultures (cf. Rom. 13:1; I Pet. 2:13)...

Whatever particular nuances Paul may have wished to call to his reader's minds, he uses a wordplay to facilitate his point; the woman who brings dishonor on her head is bringing dishonor upon her husband, and thus upon the Christian family.⁸⁹

Concerning I Corinthians 14:34-35, Keener summarizes his arguments with these words:

Paul's point is that those who do not know the Bible very well should not set the pace for learning in the Christian congregation... In Corinth, the issue had come to a head with uneducated women interrupting the Scripture exposition with questions. Paul suggested a short-range and a long-range solution to the problem in his instructions on how to bring order back to the Corinthians' church services. The short-range solution was that the women were to stop interrupting the service; the long-range solution was that they were to learn the knowledge they had been lacking.⁹⁰

In regard to the passage which draws the most heated arguments, I Timothy 2:9-15, Keener makes an excellent point. If the passage is difficult to understand, casting some doubt on whether or not women should be allowed to teach and/or have authority over men, one should then give credence to what a woman believes is her "calling" from the Holy Spirit. Many traditionalists, state that a sense of "call" is too subjective. Yet, most Christians never seriously object, in other situations, when another person says, "God has laid (something) on my heart." Keener writes:

Perhaps if we do not know for certain whether

⁸⁹Craig S. Keener, *Paul, Women & Wives: Marriage and women's ministry in the letters of Paul* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers: 1992), 34-35.

⁹⁰*Ibid.*, 88.

we are right or wrong, we ought to give the "benefit of the doubt" to those who claim that God called them and who evidence the fruits of that call in their lives, rather than passing judgment on them.⁹¹

This book presents a convincing argument that the egalitarian position is the correct position.

I Suffer Not a Woman

by Richard Clark Kroeger and Catherine Clark Kroeger

It is important to consider that there may be a way to translate I Timothy 2:12 other than the traditional way. This was brought to the attention of thoughtful readers through an essay by Catherine Kroeger about thirteen years ago.⁹² In that essay, she defended a possible translation of I Timothy 2:12 as follows: "I do not allow a woman to represent herself as the source of man." Dr. Kroeger went on to suggest that a problem the church in Ephesus faced was that of combating proto-gnosticism. The early gnostics were teaching, contrary to Genesis, that a woman was created first, and she became the "source" of the first man. This possibility of a growing heresy fits very nicely with what Paul refers to in verses 13 through 15.

This book offers several other possible translations of I Timothy 2:12, based on the classical Greek meanings of the word *authentein* - usually translated "to have authority" in most English Bibles. Since *authentein* is found only here in

⁹¹Ibid., 113.

⁹²Catherine Clark Kroeger, *1 Timothy 2:12 - A Classicist's View in Women, Authority and the Bible*, ed. Alvera Mickelsen (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1986), 225-244.

the Bible, it was appropriate for scholars Richard and Catherine Kroeger to search classical Greek to help them glean other possible meanings of this rare word. They state that:

Authentein, the verb in question, is defined in New Testament dictionaries as meaning to usurp authority or to dominate, although Greek writers used the term to imply other values such as to kill someone, to begin something or be responsible for the initiation of something, to lay claim to property as being one's own, to claim to be the author of something, and so forth. To translate that one verb differently changes the sense of the entire passage. The text, which causes women so much perplexity, can be rendered in a variety of ways.⁹³

The Kroegers have filled this book with fascinating facts about the life, religions, and culture of people living in and around Ephesus at the time Timothy was facing problems in the church. It is particularly interesting to read about how Jewish and proto-gnostic thought could have had a profound influence on the Ephesus church. Most of the suggested problems associated with the life, religion, and culture are not obvious to present day readers of Paul's admonitions, warnings, and instructions written almost two thousand years ago. Clearly, there may be more than one way to understand the I Timothy passage which, as normally translated, seems to deny women the opportunity to become pastors and elders.

Women in the Church: A Fresh Analysis of I Timothy 2:9-15

Edited by Kostenberger, Schreiner, and Baldwin

This is another book which deals primarily with the

⁹³Richard Clark Kroeger and Catherine Clark Kroeger, 37.

difficult I Timothy passage. The eight scholars who contributed to this book, however, strongly defend the traditional interpretation of the text. These scholars look at the cultural setting in Ephesus in the first century, the genre of the I Timothy letter, the possible translations of *authentēin* in I Timothy 2:12, the syntax and hermeneutics of verse 12, and the relationship of the I Timothy passage to Galatians 3:28. Much of what is written here takes exception to what the Kroegers presented in *I Suffer Not a Woman*.

Traditional scholars take the view that because Adam was created first, one must understand that God intended him to have authority over Eve, and that this is the model for male-female relationships in marriage and in the church for all time. In the chapter subtitled *A Dialogue with Scholarship*, Thomas Schreiner writes:

It seems that unclarity is in the eye of the beholder, for the thrust of the verse (I Tim. 2:13) has been deemed quite clear in the history of the church. The creation of Adam first gives a reason why men should be the authoritative teachers in the church.⁹⁴

Following the "order of creation" argument, Schreiner continues with this line of reasoning:

God's order of creation is mirrored in the nature of men and women. Satan approached the woman first not only because of the order of creation but also because of the different inclinations present in Adam and Eve. Generally speaking, women are more relational and nurturing and men are more given to rational analysis and objectivity. Women are less prone than men to see the importance of doctrinal formulations, especially when it comes to the issue of identifying heresy and making a stand for the

⁹⁴Andreas J. Kostenberger, Thomas R. Schreiner, H. Scott Baldwin, ed., *Women in the Church: A Fresh Analysis of I Timothy 2:9-15* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1995), 136.

truth. Appointing women to the teaching office is prohibited because they are less likely to draw a line on doctrinal non-negotiables, and thus deception and false teaching will more easily enter the church. This is not to say women are intellectually deficient or inferior to men. If women were intellectually inferior, Paul would not allow them to teach women and children. What concerns him are the consequences of allowing women in the authoritative teaching office, for their gentler and kinder nature inhibits them from excluding people for doctrinal error.⁹⁵

Schreiner's argument does not follow. If women are less prone "to see (emphasis mine) the importance of doctrinal formulations, especially when it comes to the issue of identifying heresy and making a stand for the truth," one must assume they are in fact less intelligent. It does not do to say they are not "intellectually inferior" after saying they are less prone to see the importance of doctrinal formulations. Does that statement not speak of an inferior ability to reason?

Conclusion

Many books and articles for scholarly journals have been written in recent years on the subject of women in ministry. This review has looked at only the most salient of them. What is here, however, shows that a great controversy has arisen among evangelical scholars. The controversy, it would seem, has not filtered down to the local church level to any significant degree. The last chapter discusses how familiar EFCA pastors and lay persons are with the arguments, and to what degree the debate is important to them.

⁹⁵Ibid., 145.

CHAPTER 4

PROJECT DESIGN

As noted in the first chapter, recent events connected with ministry in New England caused the writer to wonder exactly what pastors and lay leaders in the Evangelical Free Church of America (EFCA) think about women in ministry. In particular, answers were needed about their attitude, in a denominational context, toward the ordination of women to become pastors in EFCA churches, with the associated authority to preach and teach.

It was concluded that the best method for obtaining answers to these questions would be to conduct surveys. One survey would be directed to EFCA lay women in order to discover whether or not there is an underlying unrest among them concerning the policy in the denomination against ordaining women. The second survey would be given to pastors and lay leaders in EFCA churches across the United States. Lay leaders in this second survey would include men and women.

In order to get a significant number of responses to a survey directed to women in the most expeditious manner, it was decided to seek the help of EFCA women attending a women's retreat at Camp Spofford, New Hampshire in the fall of 1998. About 200 women normally attend this retreat each year.

Two potential weaknesses in this survey were accepted. First, a small percentage of women attending the retreat would probably not be very active, if at all, in an Evangelical Free Church. Second, the sampling would not represent women across the United States. It was decided to accept any errors in the survey results based on these weaknesses because neither weakness seemed to be significant. The number of women who attend the annual retreat and are not involved in an EFCA church is small. Further, in an effort to obtain information from only EFCA women, the survey indicated that it was prepared for women who attend an EFCA church. Concerning the second weakness, the fact that only women in New England would respond, it was decided that this would simply be acknowledged as a weakness.

About 275 women attended the women's retreat. Of that number, 110 voluntarily responded to the survey. Some of the surveys were only partially filled out. It was gratifying to receive the full cooperation of the EFCA women in New England. An analysis of the results of this survey may be found in the next chapter, and a copy of the survey itself is included as appendix A.

The second survey was designed to determine the attitudes of pastors and lay leaders across the United States. The survey form was redesigned to be more easily read, and to correct some of the less than professional wording in the first survey. A copy of this second survey is included as appendix B.

It would have been too expensive to send surveys to all of the approximately 1,245 EFCA churches in the United

States. For this reason, only 415 churches received the survey. These churches were selected at random. Large sheets of mailing labels were obtained from the EFCA Ministerial Office in Minneapolis. Then, in order to obtain a random sample, every third label was taken from the sheets and placed on an envelope. In this way, no criteria such as size, location, prominence, known theological stance, relationship to the one taking the survey, ethnic influence, etc. was involved in making the selection of the churches to receive surveys.

Three surveys were placed in each envelope sent to the randomly selected churches. The pastor or senior pastor was requested to fill out one survey. He was also requested to give one copy each of the survey to a male and a female lay leader in his church. A stamped and addressed return envelope was also provided with the survey forms.

There are two possible problems associated with this method. For one thing, many churches did not return the survey. One wonders if primarily those who have strong opinions or feelings about the issue of ordaining women were the ones who bothered to respond. Certainly, some pastors made the effort to return the survey out of courtesy. Yet, emotional involvement may have prompted many to respond. Second, several pastors did not give the surveys to lay leaders and simply returned their own responses. It is not clear whether they did this because they wanted only their opinions to count, or because they did not think lay leaders could or would respond, or because they were not interested in making the effort to obtain lay leader responses. Perhaps

other reasons could account for this development, but it is curious.

There were three mistakes in the survey. Two were minor typographical errors, but one seriously damaged the possibility of obtaining objective results on one question. The typographical errors were as follows:

The first was "If a women..." in lieu of "If a woman..." (This error was pointed out by several respondents, but it did not affect the results because the sentence is clear and the typographical error is obvious.)

Under the "age range" question, one range group appeared as "40-40" in lieu of "40-49." (Here again, many respondents picked up on this error. It too, however, did not make a difference in the results.)

The one mistake which did damage the results of our survey is found in this question: If a women (see above) were scheduled to preach at a church service to which you were invited, would you

- ☐ boycott the service and encourage others to boycott it as well?
- ☐ boycott the service, but not encourage others to do so?
- ☐ feel indifferent to the issue?
- ☐ plan to attend the service?
- ☐ not only plan to attend the service, but invite others to do so as well?

The use of the word "boycott" is regrettable. A number of people pointed out that this word has negative connotations, and several people wrote explanations about why

they would not attend a service at which a woman was preaching without considering it a "boycott" as they understand the word. Unfortunately, it is impossible to quantify responses which contain vague attitudes and understandings.

Except for the above serious mistake in the wording of one question, we believe that the survey as a whole served the purpose intended, and the project was reasonably well designed.

CHAPTER 5

OUTCOMES

What are the outcomes of the two surveys discussed in chapter four? Only when the results have been analyzed can one draw some conclusions and make recommendations for consideration by the leadership of the Evangelical Free Church of America (EFCA).

The analysis of the two surveys must involve both statistical analysis and subjective evaluations of numerous comments written on the survey forms which either qualified answers or explained why no answer was given. For the dominant flavor of the latter, typical comments are included with the analysis of several survey questions.

What remains unconveyed is the emotional effect some of the comments had on the researcher. The way many comments were phrased communicated a critical and defensive attitude on the part of the one writing. In several instances, the criticism was rather personal. The researcher certainly did not anticipate the level of emotional involvement some people, especially pastors, demonstrated. This is particularly regrettable in the light of the usual tolerance EFCA people have in discussing controversial questions (e.g. Calvinism vs. Arminianism, infant baptism, etc.). It appears, however, that the question of whether or not women

may be ordained for pastoral ministry, especially as senior pastors, is an emotionally charged question for many in the EFCA.

Analysis of a Pilot Survey Given to EFCA Women

This survey was given as a pilot survey to EFCA women living in New England who attended a retreat in the fall of 1998. The survey form was filled out on a voluntary basis with 110 women responding. The responses to this survey were hand tabulated. Three questions on the survey given to EFCA women seek opinions and can be answered by "yes," "no," or "not sure."

The first question is as follows: **At this time, the EFCA does not ordain women to be pastors. Do you agree with this policy?**

Responses: N = 110

83 <u>yes</u>	(75.5%)
6 <u>no</u>	(5.5%)
20 <u>not sure</u>	(18.2%)
1 <u>no response</u>	(0.9%)

The second question: **If you believe that women should not be ordained, do you see this as a Biblically based doctrine?**

Responses: N = 110

81 <u>yes</u>	(73.6%)
1 <u>no</u>	(0.9%)
5 <u>not sure</u>	(4.5%)
23 <u>no response</u>	(20.9%)

The third question: **If you believe that women should be ordained, do you see this as a Biblically**

based doctrine?

Responses: N = 110

1	<u>yes</u>	(0.9%)
4	<u>no</u>	(3.6%)
8	<u>not sure</u>	(7.3%)
97	<u>no response</u>	(88.2%)

As can be seen by comparing the answers to the second and third questions with those of the first question, there was some confusion on the part of a few people as to which questions they should answer and how:

One person did not answer whether or not she agreed with EFCA policy, but answered that she did not believe ordination of women is Biblically based. She may have been unsure of EFCA policy.

Three people answered that they agreed with EFCA policy, and followed that with the answer that not ordaining women is Biblically based (*second question above*). Then, as if to emphasize their belief that *women should not be ordained*, they answered that the ordination of women is not Biblically based (*third question above*). Instructions on the form indicated they were not expected to answer this second question about a Biblical basis for their beliefs.

Another person answered that she was "not sure" about ordaining women, but then answered that not ordaining women is not Biblically based. (She was not required to answer this question.)

One answer came from a person who did not agree with EFCA policy, but answered that she believed *not ordaining* women is Biblically based. She may not understand EFCA policy.

Those whose answers did not follow, however, account for less than 10% of the respondents. The confusion may indicate women were uncertain how to respond to the issue in general.

Only a few women wrote down Bible verses to support their beliefs under the question which sought this information. The verses that were listed include the usual verses in I Timothy 2 and 3, I Corinthians 11 and 14, and Galatians 3. One respondent listed a series of verses to be taken together as follows: *"As I put together Eph. 1:22; 4:15; 5:23; Col. 1:18; 2:19 I feel men only should be pastors."* Some other verses listed were: Matt. 10:2-4; John 4:29-39; John 20:17; Eph. 4:11-13; Titus 1:5-9; Titus 2:3-5.

The following tables are presented to aid in the evaluation of significant trends or groupings according to age, education, areas in which respondents live, and experience as EFCA church officers.

Table 1. Frequencies of agreement with EFCA policy concerning not ordaining women according to age groupings
N=110

Agreement with EFCA Policy	18-29 %	30-39 %	40-49 %	50-59 %	60+ %	Totals %
Agree	10.0	16.4	28.2	9.1	10.0	73.7
Disagree	0.0	1.8	1.8	0.9	0.9	5.4
Not Sure	1.8	5.5	8.2	0.9	1.8	18.2
Totals	11.8	23.7	38.2	10.9	12.7	

1 person did not answer question. 2 people did not give age.

No significant information can be derived from an analysis of the above table. Women 30 to 39 disagree or are not sure in slightly greater numbers (30.8%) than in the other age groups. This may indicate that younger women are taking a more egalitarian view. This survey, however, did not receive many responses in the 18 to 29 age group and a trend cannot be supported with so few responses.

Table 2. Frequencies of agreement with EFCA policy concerning not ordaining women according to education
N = 110

Agreement with EFCA Policy	High School %	College %	Graduate %	Totals %
Agree	26.4	37.3	11.8	75.5
Disagree	1.8	2.7	0.9	5.4
Not Sure	6.4	10.9	0.9	18.2
Totals	34.6	50.9	13.6	

1 person did not answer question.

Those with graduate degrees agree with the EFCA policy by a larger percentage than others. This is contrary to the finding in the second survey and may show that New England women with higher education are more conservative.

Table 3. Frequencies of agreement with EFCA policy concerning not ordaining women according to living area
N = 110

Agree with EFCA Policy	Rural %	Suburban %	City/Town %	Totals %
Agree	29.1	15.5	27.3	71.9
Disagree	1.8	0.9	2.7	5.4
Not Sure	9.1	1.8	6.4	17.3
Totals	40.0	18.2	36.4	

1 person did not answer question. 5 people did not answer living area.

No significant findings can be gleaned from the above table.

Table 4. Frequencies of agreement with EFCA policy concerning not ordaining women according to being in leadership
N = 110

Agreement with EFCA Policy	Held EFCA Church Office %	Not Held EFCA Church Office %	Totals %
Agree	30.0	35.5	65.5
Disagree	0.9	2.7	3.6
Not Sure	1.8	11.8	13.6
Totals	32.7	50.0	

2 people did not answer question. 17 people had held an office in a church in another denomination.

From the above table it may be seen that a greater proportion of respondents in the "Not Held EFCA Church Office" category are unsure about EFCA policy. This may indicate that women who are received into leadership are those who tend to agree with the EFCA policy.

The following quotations are taken from answers to questions seeking comments and are either typical or considered significant in terms of demonstrating how EFCA women feel about this matter. The first quotation seems to convey a serious concern for how the denomination would be affected if women were to be ordained as pastors.

The world has infiltrated our church, and, I am sure, you will find this is true in this area also. I encourage you not to be swayed by "popular" belief but by the sound teaching of God's Word. "Stand firm." I understand EFCA is the only denomination left that does not ordain women preachers. May their faithfulness to sound doctrine continue.

I don't feel that a woman is hindered in any way in using God given gifts to serve. You don't

have to be behind a pulpit to be an effective and supportive woman in the ministry. Why limit yourself to a pulpit position?

Men and women have equality before God yet differing roles and responsibilities in the church. I don't believe Scripture teaches women's roles include authority over men in the church.

I believe women can teach children and mentor other women in the church but men should be the leaders.

Eph.5:22-24. If we are to submit to our husbands, how can we at the same time be his authority as leader, shepherd of the church?

I see many more women than men using their gifts in ministry in our church.

I do not feel restricted in any way.

Women should be taught by men or not try to tell men things, because the nature of their psychological makeup - men seem to be reluctant to listen to women try to tell them what they are doing wrong! ...they are more likely to tolerate criticism from another man.

Men have natural authority (Biblical). A woman with seminary background certainly can work in a church, but I believe that she should be under her church's authority. I'm comfortable with EFCA policy as it stands now. Women not under a Biblical authority tend to take over...

The pilot survey given to women in EFCA churches in New England reveals that there is no strong undercurrent of dissatisfaction among these women concerning the prohibition of women to ordained pastoral positions. The majority seems to be satisfied with the opportunities women have to minister in the church without seeking ordination to pastoral positions for themselves or others. Support of EFCA policy is far from unanimous, however. Almost one-fourth of the women either disagree or are not sure about EFCA policy

toward women in ministry. It should be noted that relatively few strong emotions were conveyed in the comments made by the women as compared to the comments made by pastors in the following survey.

Analysis of a Survey Given to EFCA Pastors and Lay Leaders

The responses to this survey were entered into a *Macintosh FileMaker Pro 4.1* database using flat-file, tab-delimited design concepts. Of the 1245 survey forms mailed, 343 (27.5%) were returned. All of these responses were entered into the database, but 134 forms had responses which could be questioned in at least one answer. A response was questioned if it seemed to contradict the response to another question. Almost all of these dubious responses occurred in questions five and six. Respondents answered question four indicating that their beliefs *had not changed in the past ten years*, but then answered questions five and six which should have been answered only if their beliefs *had changed in the past ten years*. Perhaps the respondents wanted to convey the reasons for changing their beliefs over a period longer than ten years. It may also indicate a sense of ambivalence on the part of some respondents.

The computer-generated quantitative data for each question based on demographic information may be found in appendices C and D. The following discussion contains some subjective analysis and the many comments which people wrote to qualify answers or to explain why they did not answer

certain questions. There were also many comments submitted which were designed to convey an opinion, an attitude, a warning, or a criticism. It should be observed that the majority of EFCA people support the policy of not ordaining women to pastoral ministry.

First Question

1. In general I believe the Bible teaches that
 - ☐ women should not under any circumstances be ordained to the pastoral ministry.
 - ☐ under unusual circumstances a woman might be ordained to the pastoral ministry.
 - ☐ under normal circumstances women can be ordained to the pastoral ministry.

Table 1: Beliefs about ordination and education level
N = 343

Category	Can never be ordained		Unusual but possible		Can be ordained	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
	%		%		%	
High School	2.6	6.4	0.3	1.5	0.3	0.6
Technical	2.3	2.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3
Assoc.	1.7	1.5	0.3	1.7	0.0	0.0
College	11.4	4.1	2.3	3.5	1.2	0.9
Masters	25.9	1.2	8.4	0.3	2.9	1.2
Doctorate	5.2	0.6	2.3	0.0	1.5	0.3

There is no clear indication that education affects one's belief about ordaining women to pastoral ministry. A

slightly larger proportion of people with college, masters, and doctoral degrees believe that women may be ordained under unusual or normal circumstances. The most significant trend appears in females with a college or a masters degree. More of these women believe ordination may be allowed than those who believe that ordination should not be allowed.

Table 2: Beliefs about ordination and living area
N = 343

Category	Can never be ordained		Unusual but possible		Can be ordained	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
	%		%		%	
City	12.8	4.1	5.0	1.5	2.3	1.5
Suburbs	12.0	2.6	3.5	1.5	1.5	0.6
Town/Village	18.1	5.8	3.5	1.7	1.5	0.3
Rural	5.5	3.8	1.5	1.5	0.6	0.9

People in various living areas have similar beliefs about the ordination of women to pastoral ministry. This is not surprising because we live in a very mobile society. Many people live in different kinds of communities during their lives. This is especially true of pastors.

Table 3: Beliefs about ordination and age range
N = 343

Category	Can never be Ordained		Unusual but possible		Can be ordained	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
	%		%		%	
18-29	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.6	0.0	0.6
30-39	12.8	3.8	2.6	1.5	0.9	0.9
40-49	20.7	7.6	7.6	2.0	2.9	1.6
50-59	10.2	5.0	2.9	2.0	1.7	0.3
60+	5.5	0.6	0.8	0.8	0.3	0.0

Proportionately, women in all age brackets are more open to the possibility of ordaining women than are men in corresponding age brackets. Men in the 40-49 and 50-59 age brackets are more open to the concept of ordaining women than are men in other age brackets.

Eleven responses indicated that the respondent either wanted an explanation of what is meant by ordination, or that the Bible does not teach anything about ordination. The following are typical responses:

I can't answer this until ordination is clearly defined.

Ordained - define term?

I am having trouble getting past the first question due to language, viz., "ordination."

I am defining ordination to mean teaching position, not certain NT explicitly teaches about ordination.

First, I do not know that the Bible teaches "ordination."

Question assumes Bible teaches something about ordination. It does not.

These comments are somewhat surprising because the booklet *Steps Toward Credentialing* published by the EFCA discusses in great detail what the denomination believes about ordination and how a man may be ordained "in pastoral ministry." Granted, the Bible is not specific about ordination, but the researcher assumed the respondents would be able to answer the question if they understood what the EFCA booklet on credentialing states. Almost all of the people who had a question about "ordination" were pastors. This makes their comments all the more interesting because they themselves were ordained at some time.

At least ten respondents wanted to know what is meant by "pastoral ministry." A typical comment was, "You have not defined pastoral ministry." Many more comments alluded to the idea that it would be all right for a woman to be involved in pastoral ministry to other women or to children. But, a woman may not act as a pastor if she teaches or has authority over a man, according to this line of reasoning. Again, the researcher assumed that the people reading the survey would interpret the question in the light of the language used in the EFCA credentialing booklet.

Most people did understand the first question. Many share the belief that women should not teach or have authority over men, but they answered the first question without making an issue over the choice of words.

Second Question

2. In my opinion, the spiritual gifts for pastoral ministry

☐ are given by God only to men.

☐ are give by God to both men and women.

(See appendix C for numerical data.)

This question inspired twelve or more comments about "spiritual gifts." Here are some representative comments:

I do not believe that pastoral ministry is a spiritual gift given to people, but people (are) given to the church.

True, women are designated as teachers and possessing certain spiritual gifts, but not in pastoral ministry.

Pastor/teacher is a spiritual gift. Eph. 4.

...women can be gifted with a "shepherding" type of gift, but Scripture draws role distinctions.

This question presumes a position regarding spiritual gifts that may not apply easily to this issue.

Gifts: does that mean teacher, administrator or the gift of pastor/teacher?

Please identify the gifts you are referring to first for clarification. This statement is not specific. Perhaps better stated: "Are any of the spiritual gifts outlined in the New Testament ever to be exercised by a man only? If so...which one(s)?"

I didn't know there were spiritual gifts for pastoral ministry...I Cor. 12-14.

These comments seem to convey a contentious attitude toward the subject being addressed. Most people who answered this question, however, were able to interpret the intent of the question and get beyond the definition of "spiritual gifts." In this question, too, many people qualified their answers by saying that a woman may have spiritual gifts but she may not use them to teach or have authority over a man in the church.

One final comment was written by a woman who takes exception to the word "opinion" used in the question:

Doctrines and thesis (sic) should never be formed on "opinion," lest we become those fallen away from God "doing what is right in his own eyes." Opinions may show human fallen direction, but stick to the Word to gain God's directive and truth. Remember, God is not a man that He should lie. Be diligent to seek truth and follow Him always. A "well done" in heaven is much better than much applause here.

Third Question

3. At present, the EFCA does not ordain women to be pastors.

- ☐ I am fully in agreement with the present policy.
- ☐ I am somewhat in agreement with the present policy.
- ☐ I'm not sure how I feel about the present policy.
- ☐ I somewhat disagree with the present policy.
- ☐ I strongly disagree with the present policy.

Table 4: Agreement with EFCA policy and education level
N = 343

Category	Fully agree		Somewhat agree		Not sure		Somewhat disagree		Strongly disagree	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
	%		%		%		%		%	
H. S.	2.9	7.9	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.0
Tech.	2.3	2.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3
Assoc.	1.7	2.6	0.0	0.6	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
College	11.4	6.7	1.2	0.6	0.6	0.6	1.5	0.6	0.3	0.0
Masters	32.1	1.7	2.3	0.0	1.2	0.0	2.3	0.6	0.6	0.9
Doctorate	7.0	0.6	0.3	0.0	0.6	0.0	0.9	0.3	0.9	0.0

Two primary points may be made from an examination of the above table. First, almost one-third of the respondents have master's degrees and agree with the EFCA policy of not ordaining women. Second, those with college, masters and doctoral degrees disagree with EFCA policy in greater numbers than those with less education. At the doctoral level, the greatest proportion of people move away from full agreement with EFCA policy toward disagreement. Even so, two-thirds of the people with doctoral degrees support EFCA policy. It must

be noted further that the majority of people agree with EFCA policy regardless of education level.

Table 5: Agreement with EFCA policy and living area
N = 343

Category	Fully agree		Somewhat agree		Not sure		Somewhat disagree		Strongly disagree	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
	%		%		%		%		%	
City	16.3	6.4	1.2	0.0	0.9	0.6	0.9	0.3	1.2	0.9
Suburbs	14.2	4.1	1.2	0.6	0.6	0.0	1.2	0.3	0.6	0.0
Town/Vil.	19.5	6.7	0.9	0.0	0.9	0.3	2.0	0.3	0.3	0.0
Rural	6.4	5.0	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.6	0.6	0.0	0.3

No significant information can be derived from the above table. Where people live in terms of community makes very little difference in their beliefs on this subject.

Table 6: Agreement with EFCA policy and age range
N = 343

Category	Fully agree		Somewhat agree		Not sure		Somewhat disagree		Strongly disagree	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
	%		%		%		%		%	
18-29	0.3	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.6	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.0
30-39	14.0	5.2	0.9	0.3	0.3	0.0	0.9	0.3	0.3	0.3
40-49	26.0	9.3	1.5	0.6	1.2	0.3	2.6	0.6	1.2	0.9
50-59	12.0	6.4	1.2	0.6	0.9	0.3	1.2	0.0	0.3	0.0
60+	6.0	1.5	0.3	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.3	0.0

Proportionately, at least twice as many women disagree with EFCA policy compared to the proportion of men who disagree in all age ranges through 50-59. As in other comparisons, however, the majority of people agree with EFCA

policy in all categories.

This question received the same qualifying comment as noted in responses to the first and second questions. Many respondents wanted to let it be known that they were in agreement with the EFCA policy, but wanted to emphasize that women should not teach or have authority over men in the church. Some further qualified this frequent comment by saying it would be all right to ordain women if they did not teach or have authority over men. For these people, the issue is not ordination but the role of women in the church.

Fourth Question

4. Has your belief about women in pastoral ministry changed in any way during the past ten years?

- ☐ no
- ☐ yes
- ☐ somewhat, but not decisively

(See appendix C for numerical data.)

Less than one in five respondents indicated that their beliefs about women in pastoral ministry had changed in a decisive manner over the past ten years. Other respondents indicated that their beliefs had changed "somewhat, but not decisively." Thus, most respondents (63.0%) replied that their beliefs had not changed in the past ten years. Having responded that their beliefs had not changed, fifty-nine people still answered question five which they should not have done, based on the way the question is worded.

Fifth Question

5. If your belief about women in pastoral ministry has shifted during the past ten years, please check the box that most accurately applies to your shift.

☐ I have moved toward a more restrictive view of women's roles in ministry.

☐ I have moved toward a more open view of women's roles in ministry.

Table 7: Belief change in 10 years with educational level
N = 343

Category	More Restrictive		More Open	
	M	F	M	F
	%		%	
High School	0.9	1.5	0.0	0.6
Tech	0.9	0.3	0.3	0.6
Assoc.	0.3	0.6	0.9	0.9
College	1.5	2.3	5.8	2.0
Masters	3.5	0.6	12.0	0.9
Doctorate	1.2	0.3	3.5	0.3

There is a clear indication in this table that people with higher education have moved toward a more open view of women in pastoral ministry over the past ten years.

Table 8: Belief change in 10 years with living area
N = 343

Category	More Restrictive		More Open	
	M	F	M	F
	%		%	
City	1.5	1.7	6.7	1.7
Suburbs	2.3	1.5	6.1	0.9
Town/Vil.	2.9	1.2	7.3	1.5
Rural	1.5	1.2	2.0	1.2

The above table also indicates that people in all types of communities have moved toward a more open view of women in ministry.

Table 9: Belief change in 10 years with age range
N = 343

Category	More Restrictive		More Open	
	M	F	M	F
	%		%	
18-29	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.6
30-39	1.7	1.2	5.5	1.5
40-49	4.7	2.9	10.8	2.0
50-59	0.9	0.9	5.0	1.2
60+	0.9	0.3	1.5	0.0

In all age groups, men have moved to a more open view of women in ministry. Women have moved toward a more open view in the 18-29, 30-39, and 50-59 age groups.

This question is a follow-up to the previous question. There were very few comments made concerning this question

other than the usual one about women not teaching or having authority over men. Even with this proviso, more people indicated they had moved toward a more "open view." This fact would be more significant if there were other indications in the survey that people would entertain the idea of ordaining women to a pastoral ministry as defined by the EFCA. The indications are not there. People may say that they are "more open," but this openness does not include allowing women to teach or have authority over men in the church.

Some people may have had a shift in their beliefs over a period longer than ten years and wanted to indicate this fact in question five. The fifty-nine people who answered this question when they were not expected to do so could be in this category. Otherwise they are ambivalent or they did not read the question well.

Sixth Question

6. If your belief about women in pastoral ministry has shifted during the past ten years, the most significant factor in that shift was

- ☐ a sermon I heard (or prepared and preached)
- ☐ a book I read
- ☐ my own detailed study of Scripture
- ☐ the opinion of people I greatly respect (colleagues, professors, friends, etc.)
- ☐ other: (please describe)

As with question five, about sixty people answered this

question when they were not expected to do so based on their answers to question four. These responses have been included in the data presented in appendix C in order to obtain as much information as possible about the factors which have caused people to shift their beliefs. Although their answers do not follow correctly the answers given in question four, they are considered significant. Note that more than one answer could be given to question six. The primary information gleaned from the answers to this question is that "own detailed study of Scripture" (20.4%) was the factor which had influenced people the most. Sermons (2.3%) and books (3.5%) were not considered very influential. Having responded this way, almost everyone listed the names of pastors or prominent authors, as well as books, as having influenced them in question eight.

Seventh Question

7. If a woman were scheduled to preach at a church service to which you were invited, would you

- ☐ boycott the service and encourage others to boycott it as well?
- ☐ boycott the service, but not encourage others to do so?
- ☐ feel indifferent to the issue?
- ☐ plan to attend?
- ☐ not only plan to attend the service, but invite others to do so as well?

(See appendix C for numerical data.)

Most people answered the question, but several

complained that the word "boycott" is too strong. There is no way of knowing whether or not this word affected the responses of those who did not offer a comment.

Many people qualified their answers, or lack of an answer, with comments such as the following:

I may attend with reservations that I would share with my fellowship church. *(Respondent did not answer the question.)*

It is the position of pastor or elder from which a woman is barred - not speaking from a pulpit. *(Respondent would plan to attend.)*

In terms of others attending, it would depend if these were people under my shepherding care or not, and other factors. Your question gives the impression that I would have no recourse like "talking privately to the elders of the church who was having the female speaker," etc. *(Respondent would "boycott" and encourage others to do so.)*

Attend but I would not attend regularly nor become a member of a female led church. Neither teaching/senior pastor nor elder board. *(Respondent did not answer the question.)*

Depends on the circumstances. If she were a special/guest speaker/teacher, I would not have a problem attending. *(Respondent did not answer the question.)*

These answers show that most of the respondents do not have such strong views that they are unwilling to listen to a woman preach in some circumstances. They would not, however, support a woman preaching on a continuing basis - especially in a church they attended regularly.

Eighth Question

8. As you think about all of the influences impacting your current belief about the ordination of women to pastoral ministry, please list specific people or

works that helped form your present position on this subject:

◆ Name any particular professors, teachers, or pastors who have influenced your thinking on this subject:

◆ Cite any particular books, magazines or articles that have influenced your thinking on this subject:

◆ Cite any particular Biblical passages or verses that have influenced your thinking on this subject:

◆ Name/cite any other sources or resources that have impacted your thinking on this subject:

In addition to individual pastors, sixty-eight prominent people, most of them theologians and scholars, were listed in response to this question. Forty-five of these people were listed only once. Dr. Wayne Grudem (21 citations) and Dr. John MacArthur (19 citations) were cited most frequently.

As for books, magazines, and articles, fifty-three were listed. Of that number, only three were in the category of magazines or articles. Forty of the books and papers were listed only once. In the category of the most influential books, one book stands out - *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* by John Piper and Wayne Grudem. This book was mentioned thirty-one times.

It is not surprising that Grudem and his book have influenced so many EFCA people. Dr. Grudem has been a professor at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School for about fifteen years, and has been an outspoken proponent for the "complementarian" (traditionalist) view.

Under the question asking which Bible verses have influenced thinking the most, sixty-four verses or passages

were cited. The verses or passages discussed in chapter two were most often listed - especially the passages in I Timothy 2 and 3, I Corinthians 11 and 14, and Titus 1:6-9. Galatians 3:28 was listed only nineteen times compared to I Timothy 2 which was mentioned 133 times.

Demographic Information

One statistic which should be noted in this information is that 245 men and ninety-six women responded to the survey. The researcher expected that there would be at least twice as many men as women responding because pastors (males) along with one male and one female lay leader from each church were asked to fill out the surveys. Among males, almost sixty-four percent who responded were pastors. This is true because some pastors did not give the surveys to their lay leaders and returned only their own response, or the lay leaders did not bother to respond. For whatever reason, responses from women represent only twenty-nine percent of the total number of responses. In analyzing this data, it is important to ask why so few lay leaders responded. Did people, both pastors and lay leaders, not put in the effort? Is it possible that some pastors did not give the surveys to the lay leaders so as to influence the data in some way?

The demographic information has been coupled with the responses to the questions in order to determine how people in different categories answered each question. More details are given in appendices C and D.

Warnings and Concerns

The following comments reveal a foreboding theme. Many responses are not quoted because the foreboding message is buried in other comments.

Warnings

May your study be according to God's Word and not popular opinion.

(Found next to the question asking for sources or resources that have impacted your thinking) ...the danger to which Christians form opinions based more on prevailing cultural mores than on Scripture; and Christians who use spurious reasoning and obscure references while ignoring explicit and clear teaching.

The ordination of women is driven by the feminist movement rather than sound exegesis.

Concerns

All the major problems in our church have been with women "trying to run the show." *(A woman's response)*

(A quotation from a woman who believes she is not allowed to use her gifts in the church) Oppressed by man's rules - (I) minister outside church - Take Heart Ministries... Teaching, Biblical Counseling, Inner Healing.

The above responses were written by women - women at the two extremes of the continuum.

As further indication of concern, here is the gist of a telephone call received during the time when the surveys were being filled out. A pastor called to say that he didn't want to give the survey to any lay leaders because it would cause more controversy in his church. He didn't want that problem!

It seems curious that asking questions about the ordination of women for pastoral ministry should create such a problem. There must be underlying, strong emotions associated with this subject.

To demonstrate that emotions are involved, note that thirteen comments were either critical of the author of the survey for raising questions which "go against the Word of God," or they were critical of women and their attempts to teach or lead. In several of these criticisms, the comments are demeaning to women. Some attribute the desire of women to lead to the feminist movement.

Personal Warning and Criticisms

Personal Warning

One pastor wrote a long letter with the following warnings for the author of the survey:

I find it hard to believe that I am writing this letter which takes me away from more beneficial ministries.

Anyone with proper religious training and Scriptural reading as a young Christian (babe), this area of teaching should have been well settled in your mind...

I believe I am writing you this because of I John 2:18. There are so many attacks on the church of Christ, as it was prophesied, that we must be on guard to keep the church pure...

Might suggest that your thesis project encompass the deception of the anti-Christ.

(A comment contained in the survey to which the above letter was attached) Beware brother, transgression of the Scriptural Doctrines is perversion of God's Word. I would be very careful of my walk in these areas.

Criticism

Thirty people found fault with the survey and the author of the survey. Many of those who offered criticism found fault with the use of words or terms such as "ordination" and "pastoral ministry." Here are some examples of the more severe critical remarks:

Please note: I thought this was a poorly thought out questionnaire. Need better definitions and explanations. Also, I felt there was a bias to the way you asked your questions; and especially in the way we were asked to answer.

Very poorly worded survey.

This survey seems rather casually assembled.

...I wonder why you want to gather up this information. ...I wonder to what use you will put it.

The above comments and other comments recorded throughout this chapter indicate that there is much emotion associated with addressing the question of whether or not women should be ordained for pastoral ministry in the EFCA. This was a surprising result.

It has become clear that many men, especially pastors, have a latent fear of allowing women to become ordained ministers on an equal footing with them. They may not consciously realize they harbor such fear, but their adamant defense of the way they interpret Scripture seems to support this assumption. Many are simply unwilling to entertain any thought that there could be another way to interpret Scripture.

Conclusions

There are three conclusions which may be drawn based on what has been learned from the survey.

First conclusion: A large majority of people in the EFCA are opposed to ordaining women for pastoral ministry in the denomination.

Second conclusion: Women (60.4% of all women) as well as men (68.6% of all men) indicated that they are opposed to ordaining women for pastoral ministry. There is little or no resentment among women that they are not being allowed to become ordained ministers and elders.

Third conclusion: Many EFCA people become emotionally involved when addressing the question of women in ordained pastoral ministry - especially if there is any hint that women could be allowed to teach or have authority over men.

Recommendations

This thesis-project concludes with two recommendations:

First recommendation: That the Ministerial Association of the Evangelical Free Church of America be made aware of the results of this study.

Second recommendation: That the Ministerial Association consider addressing the subject of ordination of women to pastoral ministry at various conferences. Perhaps, in a structured meeting, some of the emotion can be eliminated from a discussion and a greater appreciation for differing views can be promoted. Further, it may be well for the

Ministerial Association to find ways to publicize denominational policy on the issue of ordaining women. There seems to be some confusion on this matter - especially among pastors.

Appendix A

A Survey Concerning Women's Ministries

Greetings:

I am working on a doctoral thesis at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. The thesis will be designed to determine the attitudes and opinions of men and women in the Evangelical Free Church of America (EFCA) concerning how women can best use their gifts in ministries maintained by our denomination. I should appreciate it very much if you would take a few minutes to complete the following survey. The results will help me determine how I should proceed with further study.

In His love,

R. C. Williams, pastor
Grace Fellowship EFC, Stonington, CT

-
1. Name (optional) _____
 2. Age____ State in which you live _____
 3. Type of community in which you live: Rural____ Suburban____ City, Town____
 4. Education level: H.S.____ College____ Graduate Degree____
 5. Are you a member or do you attend an Evangelical Free Church (EFC)? yes____ no____
 6. If yes, how long have you been attending an EFC? _____years
 7. Have you ever joined or attended (one yr. or more) a church in another denomination? yes____ no____
 8. If yes, what denomination? _____
 9. Are you, or have you been, a church officer? yes____ no____
 10. What office did you hold? _____
 11. In which denomination did you hold a church office? EFC____ Other____
 12. Have you had a teaching ministry in an EFC church? yes____ no____
 13. If yes, what and whom did you teach? _____
 14. At this time, the EFCA does not ordain women pastors. Do you agree with this policy? yes____ no____ not sure____
(If you answered "yes," please answer 15. If you answered "no," please answer 16.)
 15. If you believe that women should not be ordained, do you see this as a Biblically based doctrine? yes____ no____ not sure____
 16. If you believe that women should be ordained, do you see this as a Biblically based doctrine? yes____ no____ not sure____
 17. Are there Bible verses you would cite to support your belief? [Cite book/chapter/verse or quote some part of the verse(s)] _____
 18. List any issues which you see as obstacles for women in using their gifts for ministry in our denomination (e.g, freedom to serve; opportunities to serve; marital status; restrictions due to divorce; requirements to be submissive, etc.): _____
_____ (may continue on back)
 19. Other comments:

Appendix B

SURVEY CONCERNING WOMEN IN MINISTRY

Dear Senior Pastor:

As part of the work on a D.Min thesis-project at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, I am exploring attitudes and opinions of men and women in the EFCA about current policy concerning the ordination of women by our denomination. It would help me very much if you would take a few minutes to complete the following eight-question survey.

In addition, please give a copy to a male and a female lay leader in your church. All these responses may be returned in the enclosed envelope.

R. C. Williams, pastor
Grace Fellowship EFC
Stonington, CT

For the following questions, please check the appropriate box:

1. In general, I believe the Bible teaches that

- ☐ women should not under any circumstances be ordained to the pastoral ministry.
- ☐ under unusual circumstances a woman might be ordained to the pastoral ministry.
- ☐ under normal circumstances women can be ordained to the pastoral ministry.

2. In my opinion, the spiritual gifts for pastoral ministry

- ☐ are given by God only to men.
- ☐ are given by God to both men and women.

3. At present, the EFCA does not ordain women to be pastors.

- ☐ I am fully in agreement with the present policy.
- ☐ I am somewhat in agreement with the present policy.
- ☐ I'm not sure how I feel about the present policy.
- ☐ I somewhat disagree with the present policy.
- ☐ I strongly disagree with the present policy.

4. Has your belief about women in pastoral ministry changed in any way during the past ten years?

- ☐ no
- ☐ yes
- ☐ somewhat, but not decisively

5. If your belief about women in pastoral ministry has shifted during the past ten years, please check the box that most accurately applies to your shift.

- ☐ I have moved toward a more restrictive view of women's roles in ministry.
- ☐ I have moved toward a more open view of women's roles in ministry.

6. If your belief about women in pastoral ministry has shifted during the past ten years, the most significant factor in that shift was

- ☐ a sermon I heard (or prepared and preached)
- ☐ a book I read
- ☐ my own detailed study of Scripture
- ☐ the opinion of people I greatly respect (colleagues, professors, friends, etc.).
- ☐ other: (please describe) _____

7. If a women were scheduled to preach at a church service to which you were invited, would you

- ☐ boycott the service and encourage others to boycott it as well?
- ☐ boycott the service, but not encourage others to do so?
- ☐ feel indifferent to the issue?
- ☐ plan to attend the service?
- ☐ not only plan to attend the service, but invite others to do so as well?

8. As you think about all of the influences impacting your current belief about the ordination of women to pastoral ministry, please list specific people or works that helped form your present position on this subject:

- ◆ Name any particular professors, teachers, or pastors who have influenced your thinking on this subject: _____
- ◆ Cite any particular books, magazines or articles that have influenced your thinking on this subject: _____
- ◆ Cite any particular Biblical passages or verses that have influenced your thinking on this subject: _____
- ◆ Name/cite any other sources or resources that have impacted your thinking on this subject: _____

Demographic Information:

Sex: ☐ male ☐ female

Age range: ☐ 18-29 ☐ 30-39 ☐ 40-40 ☐ 50-59 ☐ 60+

Education: ☐ high school; ☐ technical training; ☐ associate degree;
☐ college degree; ☐ master's degree ☐ doctoral degree.

Area in which you live: ☐ city; ☐ suburbs; ☐ town/village; ☐ rural.

State in which you live: _____

Your present ministry position in your church: _____

Appendix C

Quantitative Analysis of Survey Results

The following is the quantitative data of the responses from EFCA pastors and lay leaders to a survey concerning women in ministry. The survey was taken in the winter of 1998-1999 as part of the work on a DMin thesis-project at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. Only the first seven questions can be analyzed quantitatively. The questions are broken down by the multiple choice alternatives, with a quantitative analysis after each alternative. (See chapter 5 for an analysis of question 8.)

1(a). *In general, I believe the Bible teaches that women should not under any circumstances be ordained to the pastoral ministry.*

Responses: Total (226); Males (168); Females (58)

Pastors (100); Lay leaders (126)

Age groupings: 18-29 (1); 30-39 (57); 40-49 (97); 50-59 (50)
60+ (21)

Education: High School (30); Tech. Trng. (17); Assoc. (11)
College (53); Masters (92); Doctoral (19); Unk. (3)

Area in which living: City (56); Suburb (50); Town/Village (82)
Rural (32); Unk. (6)

1(b). *In general, I believe the Bible teaches that under unusual circumstances a woman might be ordained to the pastoral ministry.*

Responses: Total (74); Males (48); Females (24); Unk. (2)

Pastors (35); Lay leaders (37); Unk. (2)

Age groupings: 18-29 (2); 30-39 (14); 40-49 (33); 50-59 (17);
60+ (7); Unk. (1)

Education: High School (87; Tech. Trng. (0); Assoc. (7)
College (20); Masters (30); Doctoral (8); Unk (2)

Area in which living: City (25); Suburb (17); Town/Village (18)
Rural (121; Unk. (3)

1(c). *In general, I believe the Bible teaches that under normal circumstances women can be ordained to the pastoral ministry.*

Responses: Total (31); Males (20); Females (11)

Pastors (14); Lay leaders (16); Unk (1)

Age groupings: 18-29 (2); 30-39 (6); 40-49 (15); 50-59 (7)
60+ (1)

Education: High School (3); Tech. Trng. (1); Assoc. (0)
College (7); Masters (14); Doctoral (6)

Area in which living: City (13); Suburb (7); Town/Village (6)
Rural (5)

2(a). *In my opinion, the spiritual gifts for pastoral ministry are given by God only to men.*

Responses: Total (116); Males (80); Females (35); Unk. (1)

Pastors (43); Lay leaders (75)

Age groupings: 18-29 (1); 30-39 (25); 40-49 (43); 50-59 (35)
60+ (12)

Education: High School (22); Tech. Trng. (8); Assoc. (7)
College (32); Masters (33); Doctoral (11); Unk. (3)

Area in which living: City (32); Suburb (22); Town/Village (38)
Rural (21); Unk. (3)

2(b). *In my opinion, the spiritual gifts for pastoral ministry are given by God to both men and women.*

Responses: Total (208); Males (149); Females (58); Unk. (1)

Pastors (105); Lay leaders (100); Unk. (3)

Age groupings: 18-29 (4); 30-39 (47); 40-49 (102); 50-59 (39)
60+ (15); Unk. (1)

Education: High School (17); Tech. Trng. (10); Assoc. (11)
College (46); Masters (101); Doctoral (22); Unk. (1)

Area in which living: City (61); Suburb (54); Town/Village (61)
Rural (26); Unk. (6)

3(a). At present, the EFCA does not ordain women to be pastors.

I am fully in agreement with the present policy.

Responses: Total (277); Males (199); Females (78)

Pastors (126); Lay leaders (150); Unk. (1)

Age groupings: 18-29 (2); 30-39 (66); 40-49 (121); 50-59 (63)
60+ (25)

Education: High School (37); Tech. Trng. (17); Assoc. (15)

College (62); Masters (116); Doctoral (26); Unk. (4)

Area in which living: City (78); Suburb (63); Town/Village (90)
Rural (39); Unk. (7)

3(b). At present, the EFCA does not ordain women to be pastors.

I am somewhat in agreement with the present policy.

Responses: Total (19); Males (13); Females (5); Unk. (1)

Pastors (9); Lay leaders (10)

Age groupings: 18-29 (0); 30-39 (4); 40-49 (7); 50-59 (6)
60+ (2)

Education: High School (2); Tech. Trng. (0); Assoc. (2)

College (6); Masters (8); Doctoral (1)

Area in which living: City (4); Suburb (6); Town/Village (5)
Rural (3); Unk. (1)

3(c). At present, the EFCA does not ordain women to be pastors. I'm not sure how I feel about the present policy.

Responses: Total (14); Males (9); Females (4); Unk. (1)

Pastors (5); Lay leaders (8); Unk. (1)

Age groupings: 18-29 (2); 30-39 (1); 40-49 (5); 50-59 (4)
60+ (1); Unk. (1)

Education: High School (2); Tech. Trng. (0); Assoc. (1)

College (4); Masters (4); Doctoral (2); Unk. (1)

Area in which living: City (5); Suburb (2); Town/Village (4)
Rural (2); Unk. (1)

3(d). At present, the EFCA does not ordain women to be pastors.
I somewhat disagree with the present policy.

Responses: Total (21); Males (16); Females (5)

Pastors (11); Lay leaders (10)

Age groupings: 18-29 (1); 30-39 (4); 40-49 (11); 50-59 (4)
 60+ (1)

Education: High School (0); Tech. Trng. (0); Assoc. (0)
 College (7); Masters (10); Doctoral (4)

Area in which living: City (4); Suburb (5); Town/Village (8)
 Rural (4)

3(e). At present, the EFCA does not ordain women to be pastors.
I strongly disagree with the present policy.

Responses: Total (11); Males (7); Females (4)

Pastors (5); Lay leaders (5); Unk. (1)

Age groupings: 18-29 (0); 30-39 (2); 40-49 (7); 50-59 (1)
 60+ (1)

Education: High School (1); Tech. Trng. (1); Assoc. (0)
 College (1); Masters (5); Doctoral (3)

Area in which living: City (7); Suburb (2); Town/Village (1)
 Rural (1)

4(a). Has your belief about women in pastoral ministry changed in any way during the past ten years? No.

Responses: Total (217); Males (151); Females (65); Unk. (1)

Pastors (100); Lay leaders (117)

Age groupings: 18-29 (2); 30-39 (42); 40-49 (92); 50-59 (57)
 60+ (24)

Education: High School (35); Tech. Trng. (13); Assoc. (10)
 College (47); Masters (90); Doctoral (18); Unk. (4)

Area in which living: City (65); Suburb (44); Town/Village (72)
 Rural (31); Unk. (5)

4(b). *Has your belief about women in pastoral ministry changed in any way during the past ten years? Yes.*

Responses: Total (66); Males (45); Females (20); Unk. (1)

Pastors (25); Lay leaders (39); Unk. (2)

Age groupings: 18-29 (3); 30-39 (18); 40-49 (33); 50-59 (9)

60+ (2); Unk. (1)

Education: High School (5); Tech. Trng. (4); Assoc. (3)

College (22); Masters (26); Doctoral (5); Unk. (1)

Area in which living: City (22); Suburb (16); Town/Village (16)

Rural (9); Unk. (3)

4(c). *Has your belief about women in pastoral ministry changed in any way during the past ten years? Somewhat, but not decisively.*

Responses: Total (60); Males (49); Females (11)

Pastors (31); Lay leaders (28); Unk. (1)

Age groupings: 18-29 (0); 30-39 (17); 40-49 (27); 50-59 (12)

60+ (4)

Education: High School (2); Tech. Trng. (1); Assoc. (5)

College (12); Masters (26); Doctoral (13)

Area in which living: City (11); Suburb (19); Town/Village (20)

Rural (9); Unk. (1)

5(a). *If your belief about women in pastoral ministry has shifted during the past ten years, please check the box that most accurately applies to your shift. I have moved toward a more restrictive view of women's roles in ministry.*

Responses: Total (47); Males (28); Females (19)

Pastors (14); Lay leaders (33)

Age groupings: 18-29 (1); 30-39 (10); 40-49 (26); 50-59 (6)

60+ (4)

Education: High School (8); Tech. Trng. (4); Assoc. (3)

College (13); Masters (14); Doctoral (5)

Area in which living: City (11); Suburb (13); Town/Village (14);
Rural (9)

5(b). If your belief about women in pastoral ministry has shifted during the past ten years, please check the box that most accurately applies to your shift. I have moved toward a more open view of women's roles in ministry.

Responses: Total (96); Males (78); Females (18)

Pastors (46); Lay leaders (47); Unk. (3)

Age groupings: 18-29 (2); 30-39 (24); 40-49 (43); 50-59 (21)
60+ (5); Unk. (1)

Education: High School (2); Tech. Trng. (3); Assoc. (6)

College (27); Masters (43); Doctoral (133); Unk. (2)

Area in which living: City (29); Suburb (23); Town/Village (30)
Rural (11); Unk. (3)

6(a). If your belief about women in pastoral ministry has shifted during the past ten years, the most significant factor in that shift was a sermon I heard (or prepared and preached).

Responses: Total (8); Males (4); Females (4)

Pastors (1); Lay leaders (7)

Age groupings: 18-29 (0); 30-39 (1); 40-49 (4); 50-59 (2)
60+ (1)

Education: High School (0); Tech, Trng (3); Assoc. (0)

College (2); Masters (23; Doctoral (0)

Area in which living: City (3); Suburb (0); Town/Village (3);
Rural (1); Unk. (1)

6(b). If your belief about women in pastoral ministry has shifted during the past ten years, the most significant factor in that shift was a book I read.

Responses: Total (12); Males (11); Females (1)

Pastors (9); Lay leaders (3)

Age groupings: 18-29 (1); 30-39 (2); 40-49 (5); 50-59 (4)
60+ (0)

Education: High School (0); Tech. Trng. (0); Assoc. (0)
College (5); Masters (6); Doctoral (1)

Area in which living: City (4); Suburb (2); Town/Village (4);
Rural (2)

6(c). *If your belief about women in pastoral ministry has shifted during the past ten years, the most significant factor in that shift was my own detailed study of Scripture.*

Responses: Total (70); Males (55); Females (14); Unk. (1)

Pastors (37); Lay leaders (30); Unk. (3)

Age groupings: 18-29 (0); 30-39 (17); 40-49 (34); 50-59 (9)
60+ (9); Unk. (1)

Education: High School (6); Tech. Trng. (3); Assoc. (2)
College (15); Masters (34); Doctoral (9); Unk. (1)

Area in which living: City (17); Suburb (20); Town/Village (20);
Rural (11); Unk. (2)

6(d). *If your belief about women in pastoral ministry has shifted during the past ten years, the most significant factor in that shift was the opinion of people I greatly respect (colleagues, professors, friends, etc.)*

Responses: Total (28); Males (20); Females (8)

Pastors (9); Lay leaders (19)

Age groupings: 18-29 (1); 30-39 (8); 40-49 (13); 50-59 (6)
60+ (0)

Education: High School (1); Tech. Trng. (2); Assoc. (2)
College (8); Masters (9); Doctoral (6)

Area in which living: City (6); Suburb (9); Town/Village (8);
Rural (4); Unk. (1)

6(e). If your belief about women in pastoral ministry has shifted during the past ten years, the most significant factor in that shift was other.

Responses: Total (34); Males (20); Females (14)

Pastors (7); Lay leaders (27)

Age groupings: 18-29 (0); 30-39 (7); 40-49 (18); 50-59 (7)
 60+ (1)

Education: High School (5); Tech. Trng. (0); Assoc. (5)

College (10); Masters (11); Doctoral (2); Unk. (1)

Area in which living: City (13); Suburb (8); Town/Village (9);
 Rural (4)

Some significant written responses of those who believe that women should not be ordained as pastors under any circumstances:

"I became a Christian."

"Seeing women pastors in other denominations"

"...from Bible and discussions"

"Sunday School Bible study"

Some significant written responses to question 6 (e) from those who believe that women may be ordained as pastors under unusual circumstances:

"Confrontation with traditionalists who did not trust the Holy Spirit's ability to lead and equip"

"I'm more open to seek God's direction instead of this is what I was taught. Women have a lot of areas for ministry without pastor role."

"Seeing the results of a 'feminist' as minister in the church I grew up in."

"Teaching homiletics to several black pastors who were part of the class"

"God's use of women in ministry"

Some significant written responses to question 6 (e) from those who believe that women may be ordained as pastors under normal circumstances:

"The Spirit within confirming truth as I studied/contemplated it"

"Experience with women in ministry; clarification of my own call"

"My awareness of racial & gender discrimination among evangelicals has grown; as has also my awareness that this issue is hardly cut & dry. I also think the EFCA mistakes some traditions for Biblical necessities."

7(a). If a woman were scheduled to preach at a church service to which you were invited, would you boycott the service and encourage others to boycott it as well?

Responses: Total (27); Males (20); Females (7)

Pastors (9); Lay leaders (18)

Age groupings: 18-29 (1); 30-39 (6); 40-49 (11); 50-59 (6)
60+ (3)

Education: High School (6); Tech. Trng. (3); Assoc. (0)
College (8); Masters (6); Doctoral (4)

Area in which living: City (10); Suburb (7); Town/Village (7)
Rural (3)

7(b). If a woman were scheduled to preach at a church service to which you were invited, would you boycott the service, but not encourage others to do so?

Responses: Total (93); Males (72); Females (21)

Pastors (48); Lay leaders (45)

Age groupings: 18-29 (0); 30-39 (26); 40-49 (36); 50-59 (25)
60+ (6)

Education: High School (12); Tech. Trng. (3); Assoc. (5)
College (20); Masters (45); Doctoral (6); Unk. (2)

Area in which living: City (28); Suburb (23); Town/Village (28)
Rural (12); Unk. (2)

7(c). If a woman were scheduled to preach at a church service to which you were invited, would you feel indifferent to the issue?

Responses: Total (45); Males (30); Females (14); Unk. (1)

Pastors (18); Lay leaders (26); Unk. (1)

Age groupings: 18-29 (1); 30-39 (10); 40-49 (24); 50-59 (7)

60+ (2); Unk. (1)

Education: High School (2); Tech. Trng. (4); Assoc. (3)

College (12); Masters (18); Doctoral (3); Unk. (3)

Area in which living: City (12); Suburb (11); Town/Village (14)

Rural (4); Unk. (4)

7(d). If a woman were scheduled to preach at a church service to which you were invited, would you plan to attend the service?

Responses: Total (143); Males (100); Females (42); Unk. (1)

Pastors (66); Lay leaders (75); Unk. (2)

Age groupings: 18-29 (2); 30-39 (24); 40-49 (66); 50-59 (34)

60+ (17)

Education: High School (17); Tech. Trng. (6); Assoc. (8)

College (30); Masters (61); Doctoral (21)

Area in which living: City (36); Suburb (29); Town/Village (52)

Rural (25); Unk. (1)

7(e). If a woman were scheduled to preach at a church service to which you were invited, would you not only plan to attend the service, but invite others to do so as well?

Responses: Total (18); Males (10); Females (8)

Pastors (7); Lay leaders (11)

Age groupings: 18-29 (1); 30-39 (6); 40-49 (7); 50-59 (3)

60+ (1)

Education: High School (1); Tech. Trng. (1); Assoc. (1)

College (8); Masters (5); Doctoral (2)

Area in which living: City (7); Suburb (4); Town/Village (3)

Rural (3); Unk. (1)

APPENDIX D

Table 1: Frequencies for question #1 and educational level
N=343

Beliefs about wm's ordin.	High school		Technical		AA		BA/BS		Masters		Doctorate	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Can never be ordained	9	22	8	9	6	5	39	14	89	4	18	2
Unusual but possible	1	5	0	0	1	6	8	12	29	1	8	0
Can be ordained	1	2	0	1	0	0	4	3	10	4	5	1
Did not answer quest.	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	4	2	2	0
TOTALS in numbers	11	30	8	10	7	11	52	29	132	11	33	3
Percentage of N=343	3.21%	8.75%	2.33%	2.92%	2.04%	3.21%	15.16%	8.45%	38.48%	3.21%	9.62%	0.87%

Table 2: Frequencies for question #1 and location
N=343

Beliefs about women's ordination	City		Suburbs		Town/ village		Rural	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Can never be ordained	44	14	41	9	62	20	19	13
Unusual, but possible	17	5	12	5	12	6	5	5
Can be ordained	8	5	5	2	5	1	2	3
Did not respond to question	1	1	4	1	2	0	0	1
TOTALS in numbers	70	25	62	17	81	27	26	22
Percentage of N=343	20.41%	7.29%	18.08%	4.96%	23.62%	7.87%	7.58%	6.41%

Table 3: Frequencies for question #1 and age range
N=343

Beliefs about women's ordin.	18-29		30-39		40-49		50-59		60+	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Can never be ordained	1	0	44	13	71	26	35	17	19	2
Unusual but possible	0	2	9	5	26	7	10	7	3	3
Can be ordained	0	2	3	3	10	5	6	1	1	0
Did not answer question	0	0	0	0	5	2	2	0	0	1
TOTALS in numbers	1	4	56	21	112	40	53	25	23	6
Percentage of N=343	0.29%	1.17%	16.33%	6.12%	32.65%	11.66%	15.45%	7.29%	6.71%	1.75%

Table 4: Frequencies for question #3 and educational level
N=343

Agreement with EFCA policy	High school		Technical		AA		BA/BS		Masters		Doctorate	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Fully agree	10	27	8	9	6	9	39	23	110	6	24	2
Somewhat agree	0	1	0	0	0	2	4	2	8	0	1	0
Not sure	0	2	0	0	1	0	2	2	4	0	2	0
Somewhat disagree	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	2	8	2	3	1
Strongly disagree	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	2	3	3	0
Did not answer question	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
TOTALS in numbers	11	30	8	10	7	11	52	29	132	11	33	3
Percentage of N-343	3.21%	8.75%	2.33%	2.92%	2.04%	3.21%	15.16%	8.45%	38.48%	3.21%	9.62%	0.87%

Table 5: Frequencies for question #3 and location
N=343

Agreement with EFCA policy	City		Suburbs		Town/Village		Rural	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Fully agree	56	22	49	14	67	23	22	17
Somewhat agree	4	0	4	2	3	2	1	1
Not sure	3	2	2	0	3	1	1	1
Somewhat disagree	3	1	4	1	7	1	2	2
Strongly disagree	4	3	2	0	1	0	0	1
Did not answer question	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
TOTALS in numbers	70	28	62	17	81	27	26	22
Percentage of N-343	20.41%	8.16%	18.08%	4.96%	23.62%	7.87%	7.58%	6.41%

Table 6: Frequencies for question #3 and age range
N=343

Agreement with EFCA policy	18-29		30-39		40-49		50-59		60+	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Fully agree	1	1	48	18	89	32	41	22	20	5
Somewhat agree	0	0	3	1	5	2	4	2	1	0
Not sure	0	2	1	0	4	1	3	1	1	0
Somewhat disagree	0	1	3	1	9	2	4	0	0	1
Strongly disagree	0	0	1	1	4	3	1	0	1	0
Did not answer question	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
TOTALS in numbers	1	4	56	21	112	40	53	25	23	6
Percentage of N-343	0.29%	1.17%	16.33%	6.12%	32.65%	11.66%	15.45%	7.29%	6.71%	1.75%

Table 7: Frequencies for question #5 and educational level
N=343

Belief changed in past 10 yrs.	High school		Technical		AA		BA/BS		Masters		Doctorate	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
More restrictive	3	5	3	1	1	2	5	8	12	2	4	1
More open	0	2	1	2	3	3	20	7	41	3	12	1
Did not answer question	8	23	4	7	3	6	27	14	79	6	17	1
TOTALS in numbers	11	30	8	10	7	11	52	29	132	11	33	3
Percentage of N-343	3.21%	8.75%	2.33%	2.92%	2.04%	3.21%	15.16%	8.45%	38.48%	3.21%	9.62%	0.87%

Table 8: Frequencies for question #5 and location
N=343

Belief changed in past 10 yrs.	City		Suburbs		Town/Village		Rural	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
More restrictive	5	6	8	5	10	4	5	4
More open	23	6	21	3	25	5	7	4
Did not answer question	42	16	33	9	46	18	14	14
TOTALS in numbers	70	28	62	17	81	27	26	22
Percentage of N-343	20.41%	8.16%	18.08%	4.96%	23.62%	7.87%	7.58%	6.41%

Table 9: Frequencies for question #5 and age range
N=343

Belief changed in past 10 yrs.	18-29		30-39		40-49		50-59		60+	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
More restrictive	0	1	6	4	16	10	3	3	3	1
More open	0	2	19	5	37	7	17	4	5	0
Did not answer question	1	1	31	12	59	23	33	18	15	5
TOTALS in numbers	1	4	56	21	112	40	53	25	23	6
Percentage of N-343	0.29%	1.17%	16.33%	6.12%	32.65%	11.66%	15.45%	7.29%	6.71%	1.75%

WORKS CITED

- Bilezikian, G. 1985. *Beyond sex role: What the Bible says about a woman's place in church and family*. 2d ed. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House.
- Christians for Biblical Equality. 1989. *Men, women and Biblical equality*. St. Paul: Christians for Biblical Equality.
- Clouse, B., and R.G. Clouse, ed. 1989. *Women in ministry: Four views. A traditional view*, by Robert D. Culver. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press.
- _____. ed. 1989. *Women in ministry: Four views. A male leadership view*, by Susan Foh. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press.
- _____. ed. 1989. *Women in ministry: Four views. A plural ministry view*, by Walter Liefeld. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press.
- _____. ed. 1989. *Women in ministry: Four views. An egalitarian view*, by Alvera Mickelsen. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press.
- DeBerg, B.A. 1990. *Ungodly women: Gender and the first wave of American fundamentalism*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.
- Elwell, W.A. ed. 1984. *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology. Image of God*, by C.F.H. Henry. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House.
- Evans, M. 1983. *Women in the Bible*. 2d ed. Carlisle: Paternoster Press.
- Franson, F. 1896. *Prophesying daughters*. St. Paul: Bible Women's Home Publishers.
- Grenz, S., and D.M. Kjesbo. 1995. *Women in the church: A Biblical theology of women in ministry*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press.
- Hanson, C.B., 1990. *What it means to be free*. Minneapolis: Free Church Publications.

- Hassey, J. 1986. *No time for silence: Evangelical women in public ministry around the turn of the century*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House.
- Hull, G.G. 1998. *Equal to serve: women and men working together revealing the Gospel*. Old Tappan: Fleming H. Revell, 1987. Reprint, Grand Rapids: Baker Books (page references are to the reprint edition).
- Hurley, J.B. 1981. *Man and woman in Biblical perspective*. Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1981. Reprint, Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House (page references are to the reprint edition).
- Keener, C.S. 1992. *Paul, women and wives: Marriage and women's ministry in the letters of Paul*. Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.
- Kostenberger, A.J., T.R. Schreiner, and H.S. Baldwin, ed. 1995. *Women in the church: A fresh analysis of 1 Timothy 2:9-15*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books.
- Kroeger, R.C., and C.C. Kroeger. 1992. *I suffer not a woman: Rethinking 1 Timothy 2:11-15 in light of ancient evidence*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books.
- Liefeld, W.L., D. Moo, and P.B. Payne. *What does the Scripture teach about the ordination of women?* Minneapolis: The Evangelical Free Church of America.
- Malcolm, K.T. 1982. *Women at the crossroads: A path beyond feminism and traditionalism*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press.
- Mathews, A. 1998. *A woman God can lead: Lessons from women of the Bible help you make today's choices*. Grand Rapids: Discovery House Publishers.
- Mickelsen, A. ed. 1986. *Women, authority and the Bible. Understanding the differences*, by J.I. Packer. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press.
- _____. 1986. *Women, authority and the Bible. Response: Strategies for change: being a Christian change agent*, by Timothy Weber. Downers Grove; InterVarsity Press.
- Olson, D. 1977. *A woman of her times: Stories of women who dared to place obedience to the commands of Christ above submission to the traditions of men*. Minneapolis: Free Church Press.
- Piper, J., and W. Grudem, ed. 1991. *Recovering Biblical manhood and womanhood: A response to evangelical feminism*. Wheaton: Crossway Books.

- Spencer, A.B. 1985. *Beyond the curse: Women called to ministry*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, Inc. Publishers, 1985. Reprint, Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc. (page references are to the reprint edition).
- The Evangelical Free Church of America. 1999. *About the EFCA. Beacon Special Issue, Volume 72, Number 3*. Minneapolis: The Evangelical Free Church of America.
- The Evangelical Free Church of America. 1996 *Steps toward credentialing*. Minneapolis: The Evangelical Free Church of America.
- The Evangelical Free Church of America. 1984. *1983-1984 Yearbook*. Minneapolis: Free Church Press.
- Thompson, R.A. 1969. *Toward new horizons: The Evangelical Free Church of America, 1959-1969*. Minneapolis: Free Church Publications.
- Tucker, R.A., and W.Liefeld. 1987. *Daughters of the church: Women and ministry from New Testament times to the present*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House.

VITA

The author of this thesis is Robert C. Williams. Born in Graham, Texas on October 19, 1934, he and his wife Karen have been married forty-one years, have four children, and five grandchildren. Upon graduating from the United States Coast Guard Academy in 1958 with a Bachelor of Science degree, Mr. Williams spent the next twenty-four years as an officer in the U. S. Coast Guard. He flew search and rescue aircraft most of his career and retired in 1982. While still in the service, Mr. Williams received a Master of Aerospace Operations Management degree from the University of Southern California. Immediately upon retiring, Mr. Williams went to Trinity Evangelical Divinity School where he received a Master of Divinity degree in 1986. Following seminary, He and his wife spent two years in The People's Republic of China teaching English to college students under the direction of English Language Institute China.

Since 1989, Mr. Williams has been the church-planting pastor of Grace Fellowship Evangelical Free Church in North Stonington, Connecticut.